

PS2

UNOFFICIAL.
UNBIASED.
UNRIVALED.

PS2 PREVIEW 2004

the games,
systems
and secrets
that will make
this year the
best ever!

100%
INDEPENDENT
PS2

PSP

TOP-SECRET
plans for Sony's
portable! FIRST-EVER
images included!!



PS3

REVEALED: When
you'll get your
first look! (HINT: It's
sooner than you think!)



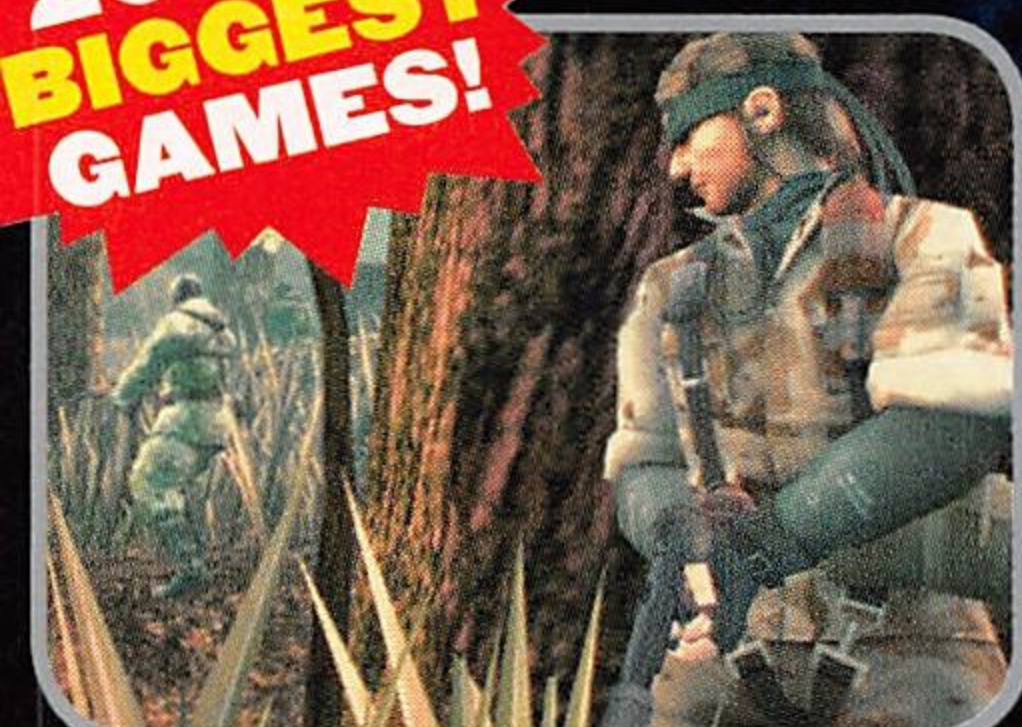
SECRETS

EXPOSED: 2004's
biggest events,
rumors and hush-
hush games!

Grand
Theft
Auto

SEGA'S
NIGHTSHADE
takes shape

2004's
BIGGEST
GAMES!



METAL GEAR SOLID 3
SNAKE EATER



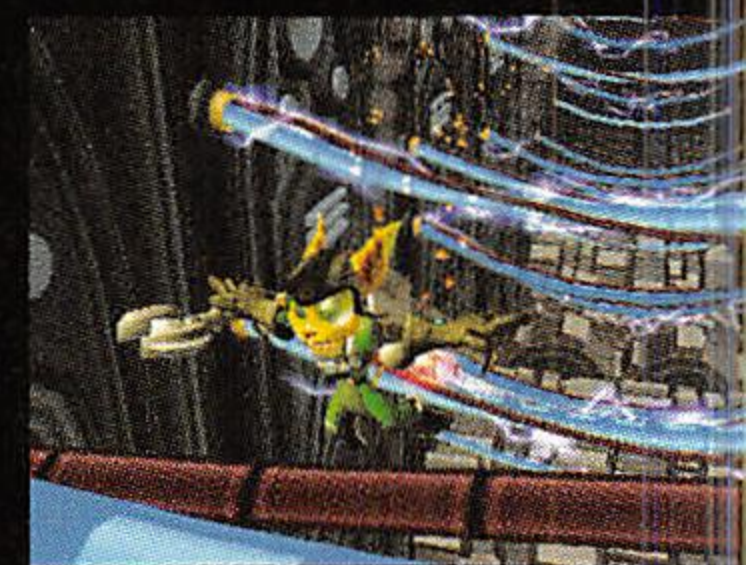
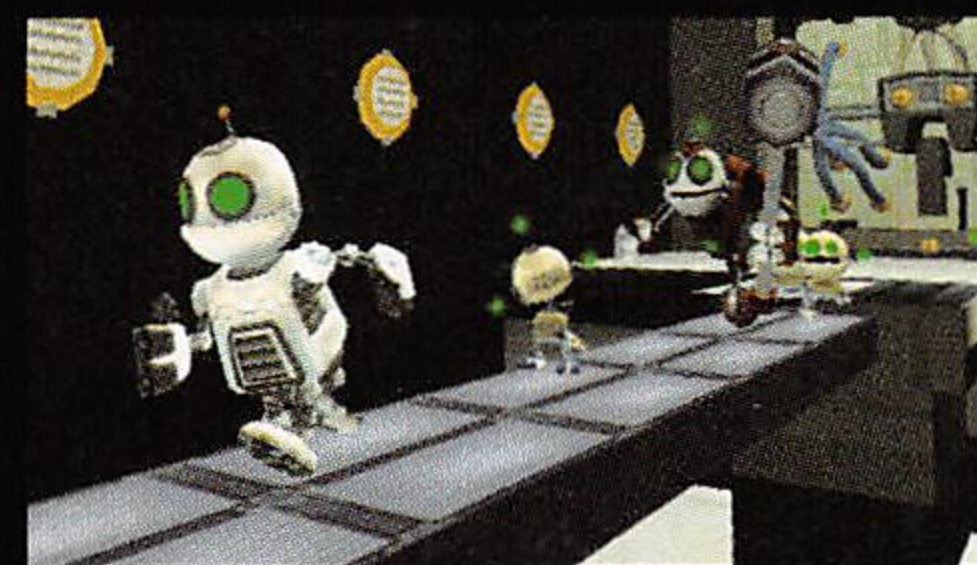
RESIDENT EVIL
OUTBREAK



GRAN TURISMO 4
THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR



The first choice for gamers
future
games



EENIE, MEENIE, MINEY, BOOM.

They're back. And they're itching for action. With tons of planets to conquer in a whole new gigantic galaxy, you better believe Ratchet & Clank are gonna sink their teeth into some destruction. Ummm, destruction. With weapon upgrades, mods, armor and the ability for Ratchet to get stronger and smarter as the game goes on, this could get uglier than The Grandmas In Bikinis Calendar after-party. Speaking of parties, there's also hoverbike racing, space combat and gladiator arenas. As far as weapons and gadgets go, Ratchet & Clank are stacked with over 50 new ones, along with unlockable upgrades, so by the end of the journey, you'll go through more weapons and gadgets than a hungry fat man will go through chicken wings at lunch. Lock and load, baby, lock and load. www.us.playstation.com

HEEZ GUN

BLITZ GUN

PULSE RIFLE

MINTURRET GUN

THRUSTER PACK

MEGAROCKET CANNON

INFILTRATOR

SHEEPINATOR

RYNO II

TETARBOMB GUN

GLIDER

GRAVITY BOMB

HOVERBOMB GUN

SWINGSHOT

HYPNOTIC

BLACK SHEEPINATOR

HEAVY BOUNCER

MULTI-STAR

SEEKER GUN

MINIROCKET TUBE

CHARGE BOOTS

HELI-PACK

CHOPPER

RATCHET & CLANK
GOING COMMANDO



LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.



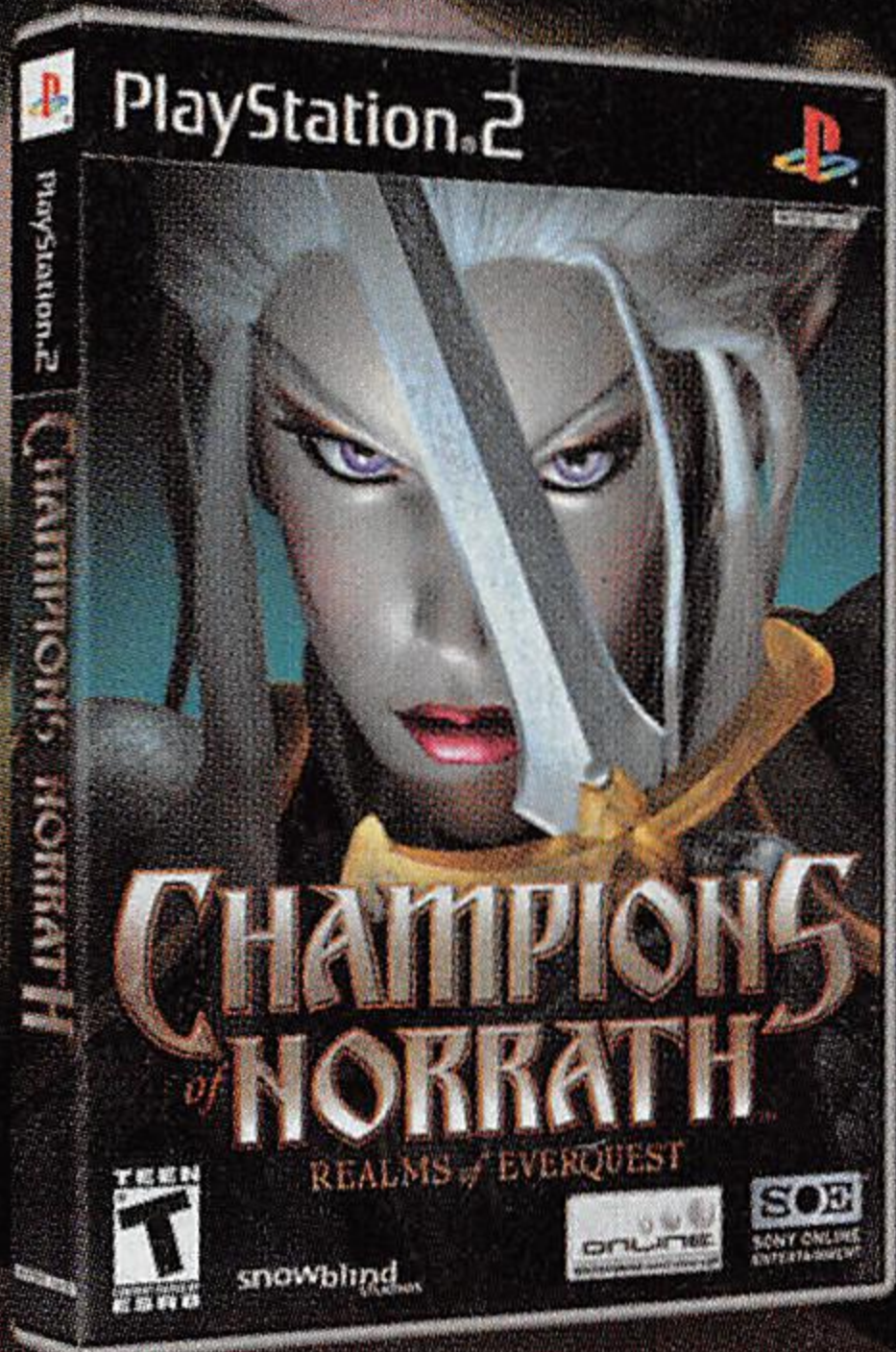
Mild Violence

PlayStation 2



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"With a feature set this deep, this may indeed be the new champion of action RPGs." — PSM

"Four-player co-op from the creators of Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance? Where do we sign up?" — IGN.com



snowblind
studios



PlayStation 2

CHAMPIONS of NORRATH™

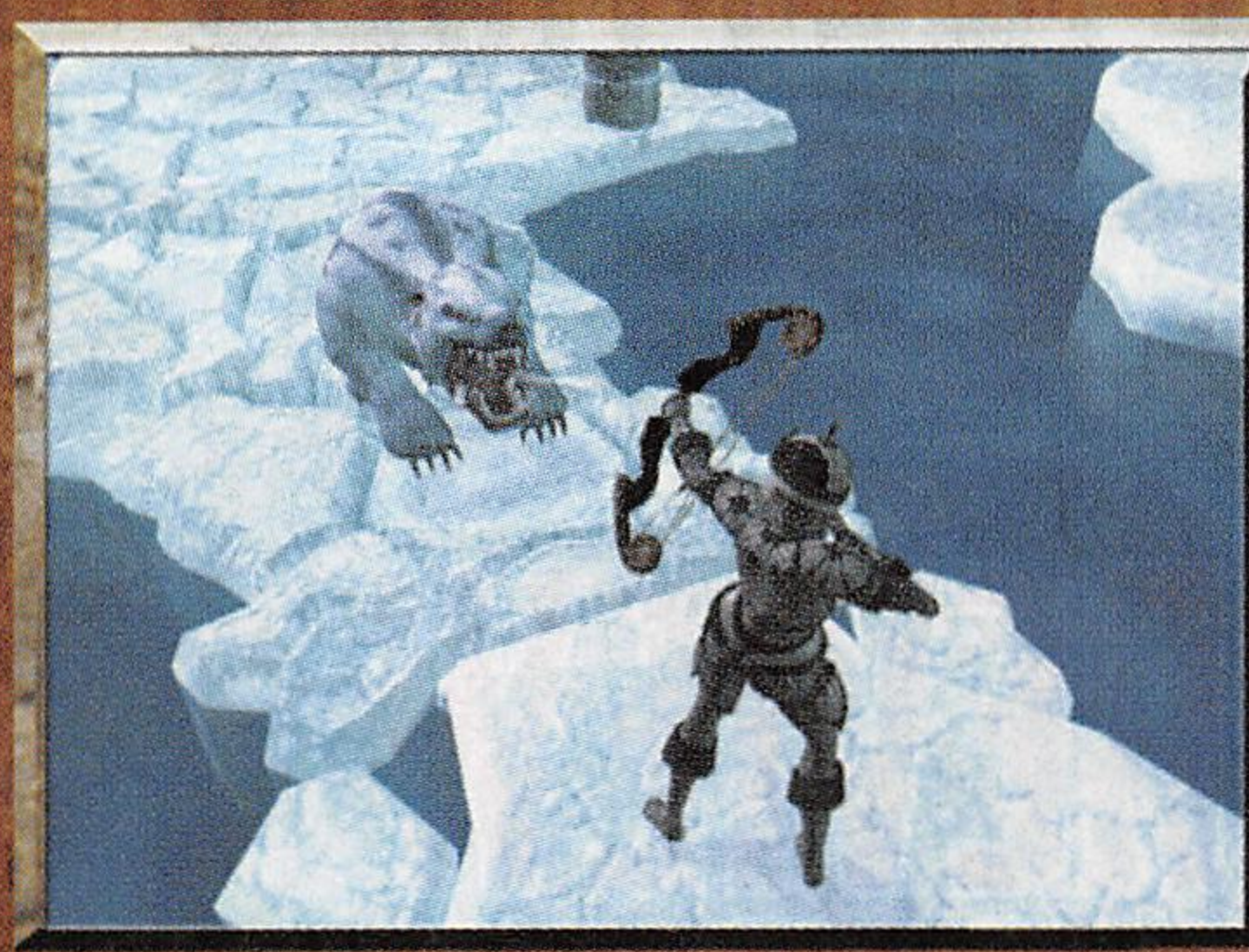
REALMS of EVERQUEST™



4 player combat online
(with no subscription fee) via
SOEGames.net and offline via Multitap.



45 levels of non-stop action with
over 50 areas to explore and conquer.



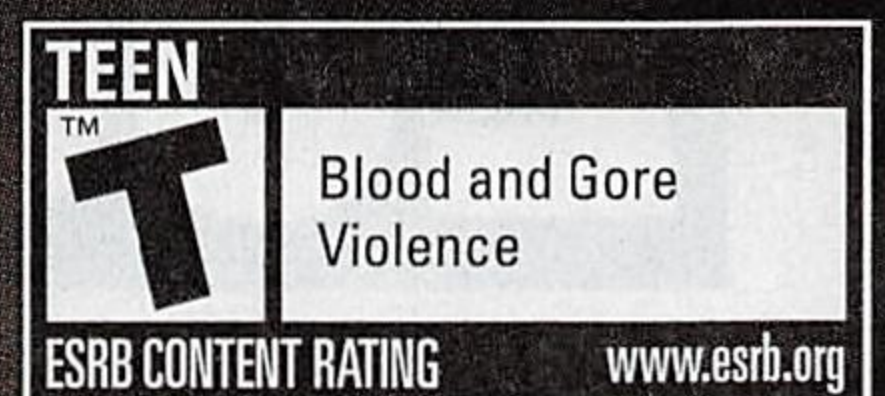
Constantly changing dungeons
and monsters make each
game a new experience.

BE A CHAMPION.

Slay your way through the glorious Realms of EverQuest in a non-stop, hack 'n' slash adventure brimming with heroic quests, beautiful locales, enchanted zones and dark, mysterious dungeons.

Create your Champion from 5 mythic races and 5 classes, customizing the look and name that conveys your unique abilities. Discover, collect, buy and trade over 10,000 items, or create your own. Master weapons, magic and combat to conquer hideous creatures and unforeseen evil. But be forewarned - a Champion shall forever be challenged!

www.championsofnorrath.com



Game Experience may change during online play

<< Seriously, what are they thinking? I can't afford all this! >>

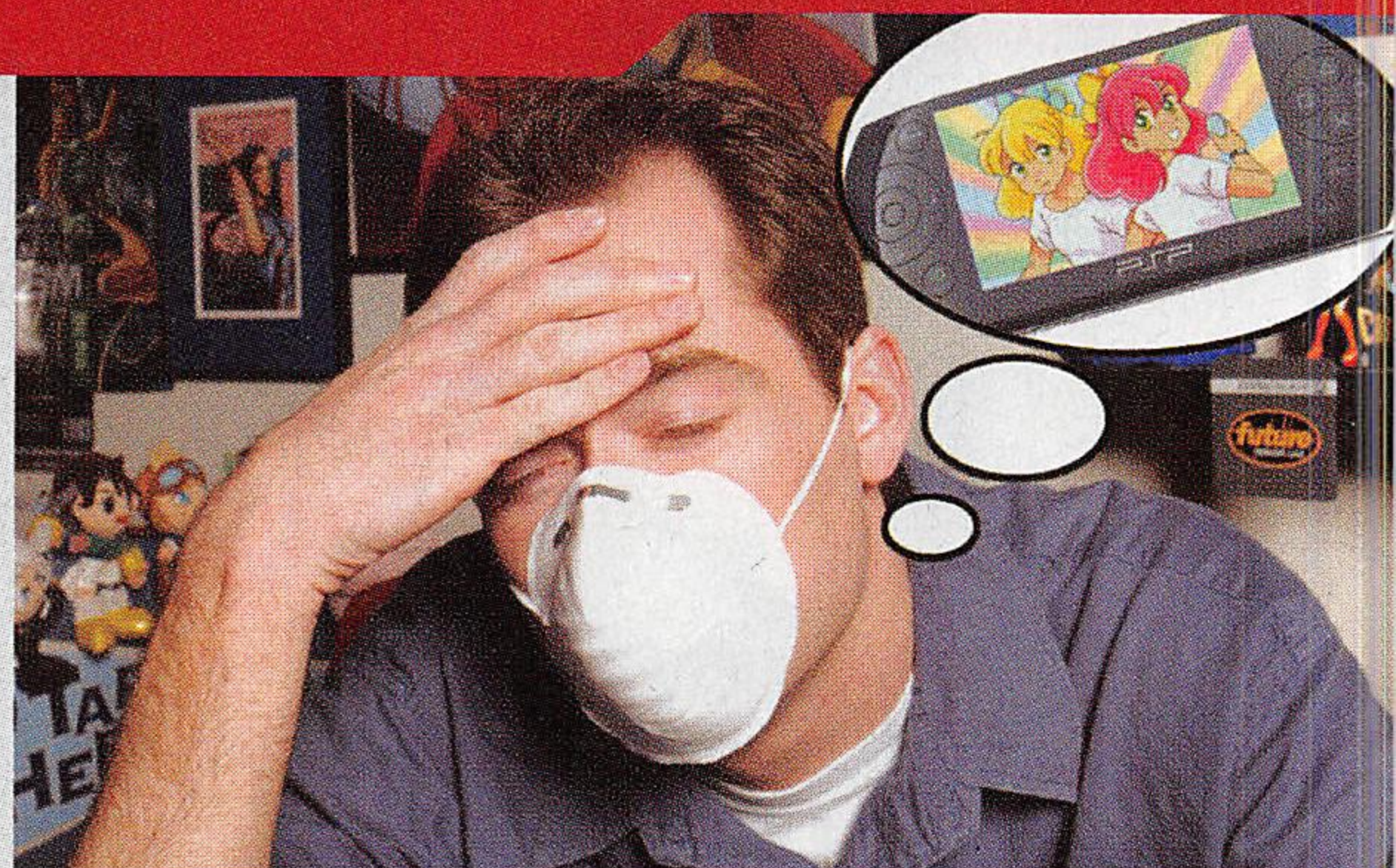
EDITOR'S LETTER

2004: The worst year ever in videogaming

Man, it's days like this that I want to crawl into bed and forget that I ever *bought* a PS2. Seriously, have you seen what's coming up in the new year? *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Final Fantasy XI*, *Gran Turismo 4*, *Resident Evil's* return to PS2, a new *Grand Theft Auto* and Sony's first-ever portable game system. I mean, seriously, what are they *thinking*? I can't afford all this!

I'll probably wind up on the streets just trying to keep up! Then there's the fact that Sony is likely to start talking about PlayStation 3 later this year, which, y'know, just totally stinks...

Okay, so I'm not fooling anyone — 2004 is going to be pure gaming nirvana with extra sugar on top. (*I really just wrote that stuff at the beginning to make the Xbox magazine guys mad*). Here's to the new year — I hope it's one of your best ones yet! **CHRIS SLATE**



▲ Chris isn't doing so well since he began selling his blood for game money.

CHRIS SLATE Editor-In-Chief

LIKES: Adventure games, platformers, arcade racers

HOBBIES: Comics, hoops, DVDs, movies, anime, drawing, iPod

What are you looking forward to in 2004?

Metal Gear Solid 3, baby! That is, if the machines don't wipe out us humans... Wasn't that supposed to happen in 2004?

MEET the TEAM

Ever wonder what a crack team of videogame journalists looks like? ...Aw, c'mon folks, just work with us a little, here...



STEPHEN FROST
SENIOR EDITOR

LIKES: Fighters, Lovers
HOBBIES: Holy Matrimony

What are you looking forward to in 2004?
Sandwiches. For the first time in my life, I won't have to make them myself.



RANDY NELSON
REVIEWS EDITOR

LIKES: Platformers, racers
HOBBIES: Comics & Anime

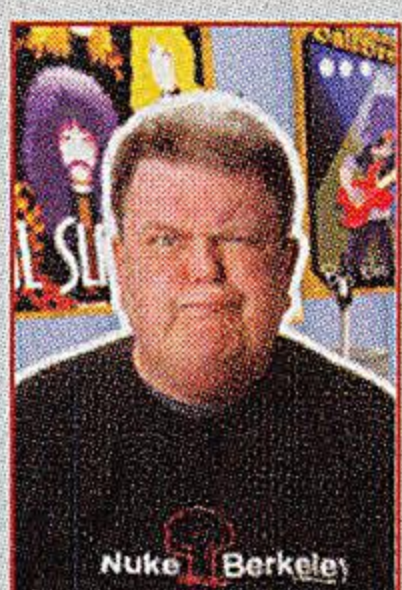
What are you looking forward to in 2004?
The Official Oingo Boingo Reunion and Clambake! Talk about excitement...



ERIC BRATCHER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

LIKES: RPGs, Weird Imports
HOBBIES: Real estate, Baby!

What are you looking forward to in 2004?
Living better, loving harder, and kicking my fellow man's ass online. Bring it, people!



BILL DONOHUE
MANAGING EDITOR

LIKES: polish-pope.com
HOBBIES: Selling CDs!

What are you looking forward to in 2004?
A lifetime supply of bajobies and 40 million bucks. That oughta cover it...



DAN FITZPATRICK
ART DIRECTOR

LIKES: Garage sales
HOBBIES: Coin collecting

What are you looking forward to in 2004?
My Yard Sale! I'm selling everything! No reasonable offer will be refused!!!



GARY LIEW
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

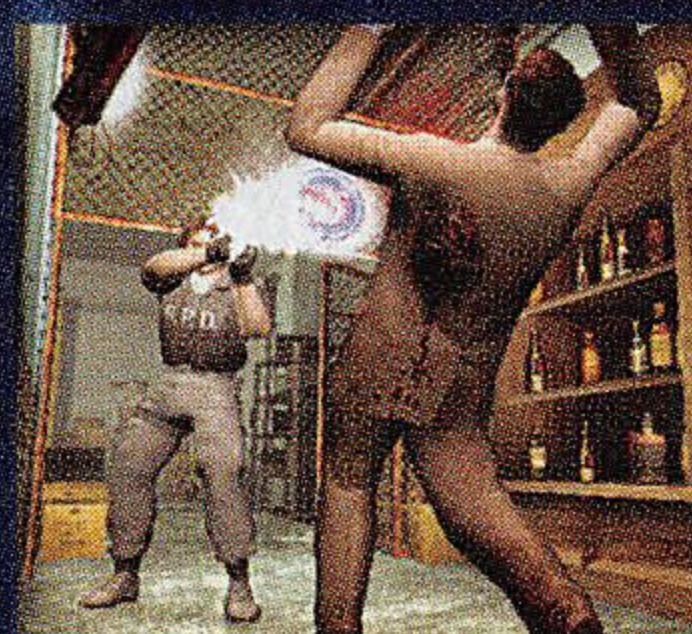
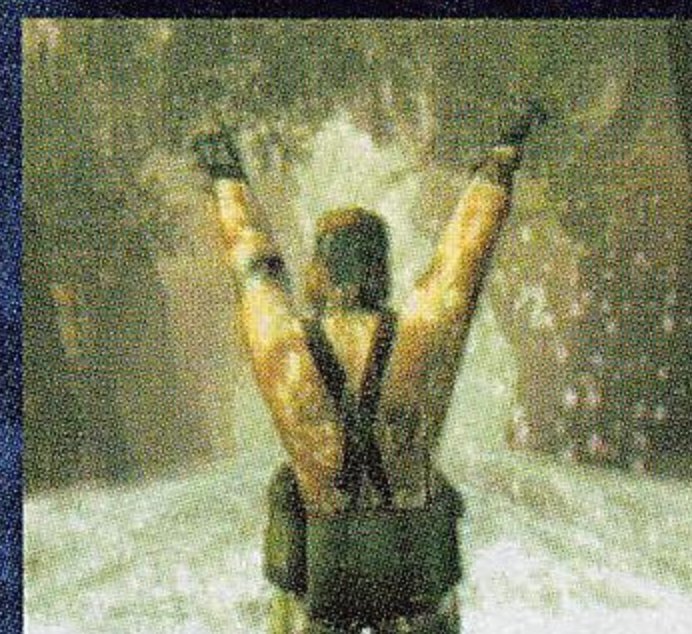
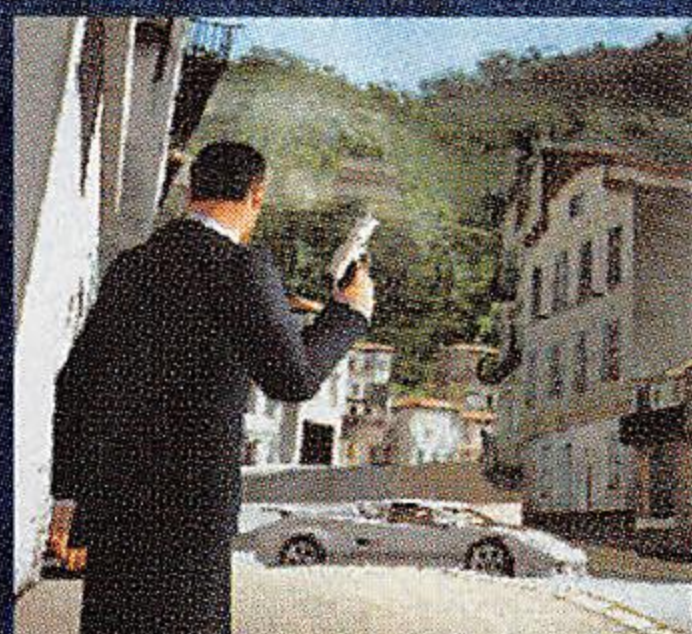
LIKES: The future
HOBBIES: Watching sunrise

What are you looking forward to in 2004?
My eyeballs are always looking forward. Will that be different in 2004?

ON THE COVER

What a year 2004 is going to be! From the next big games to the new hot systems, we cover it all on pg. 50!

PS2 PREVIEW 2004





NO ONE'S TALLER THAN
THE LAST MAN STANDING.

WWW.ININJAGAME.COM



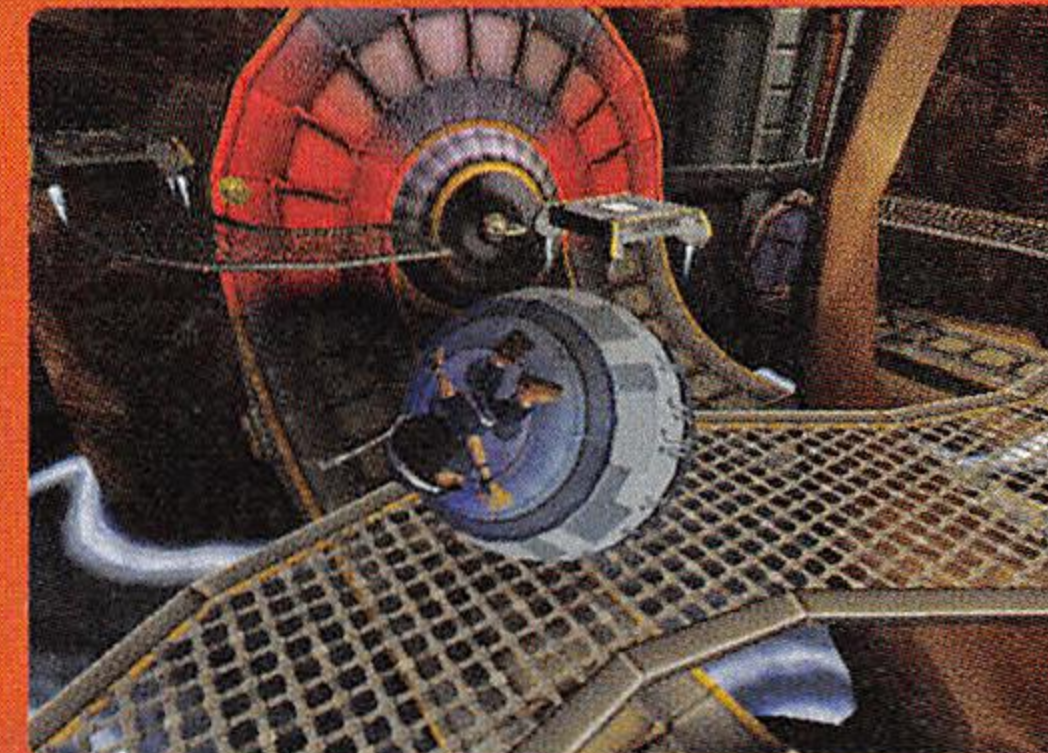
Get Ninja-crazy by collecting power-ups to incite Ninja's special Rage abilities.



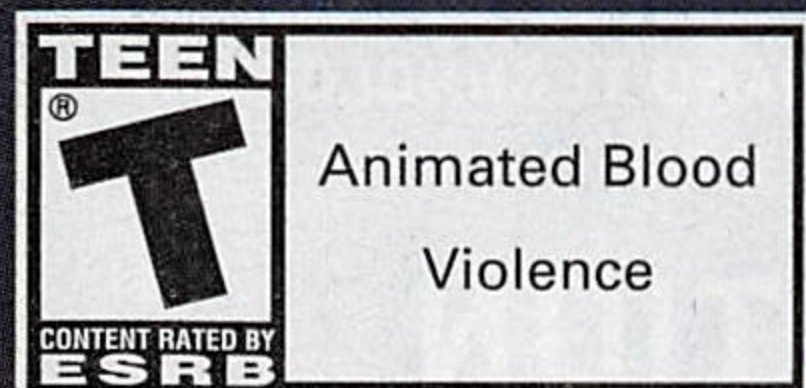
Gravity? Run up walls and tear through levels with moves only the most insane Ninja would try.



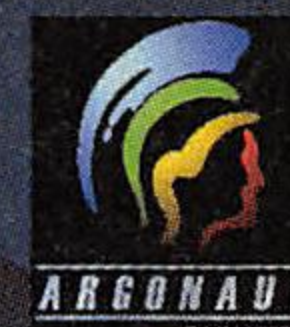
Use multiple weapons to take apart any foe that dares stand between Ninja and his missions.



Five huge worlds, mini-quests and grueling missions that will separate the Ninjas from the boys.



PlayStation[®]2



WORLD

Bad Weather Credited for Sudden Drop in Colombian Cocaine Production

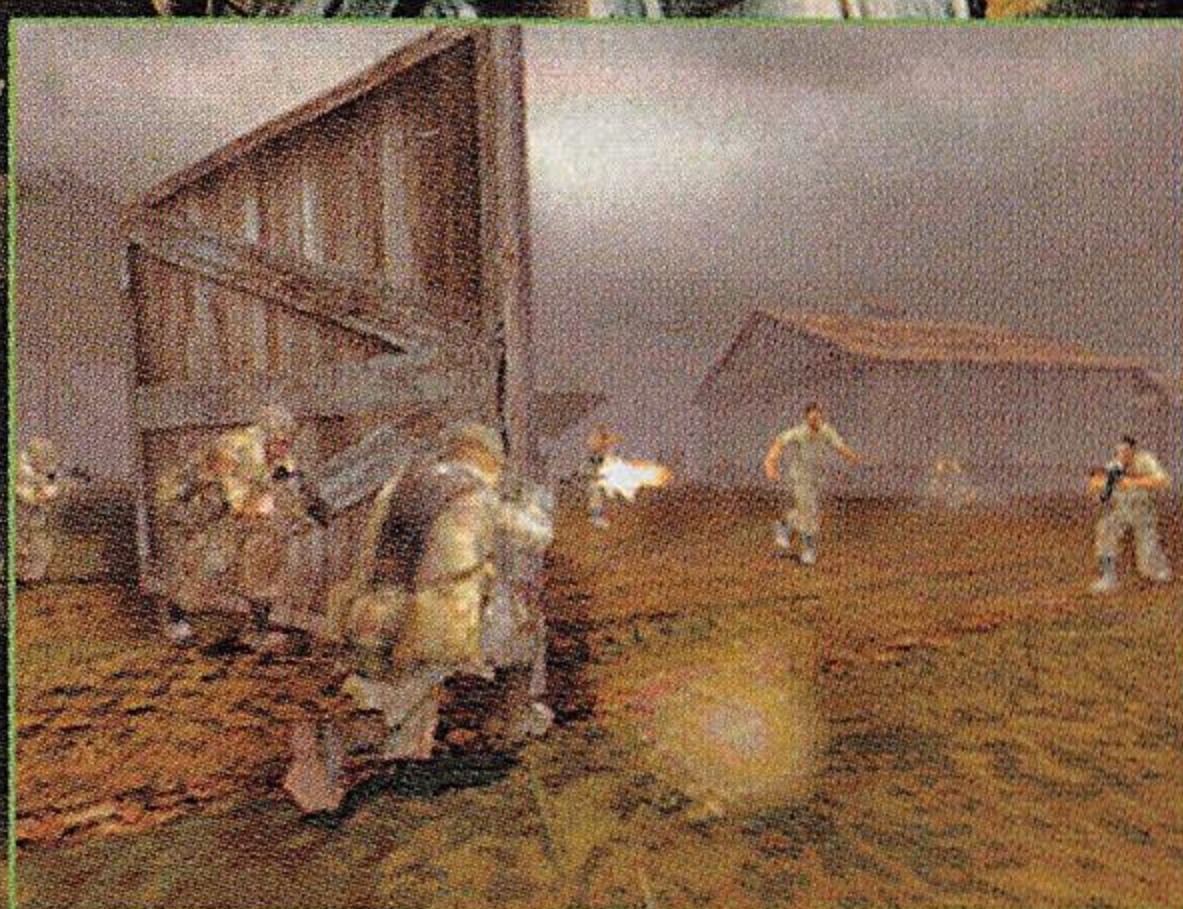
By Gene Colan
GLOBE PRESS NETWORK

as meteorologists around the world continue to examine the data. A press conference is scheduled for next week.

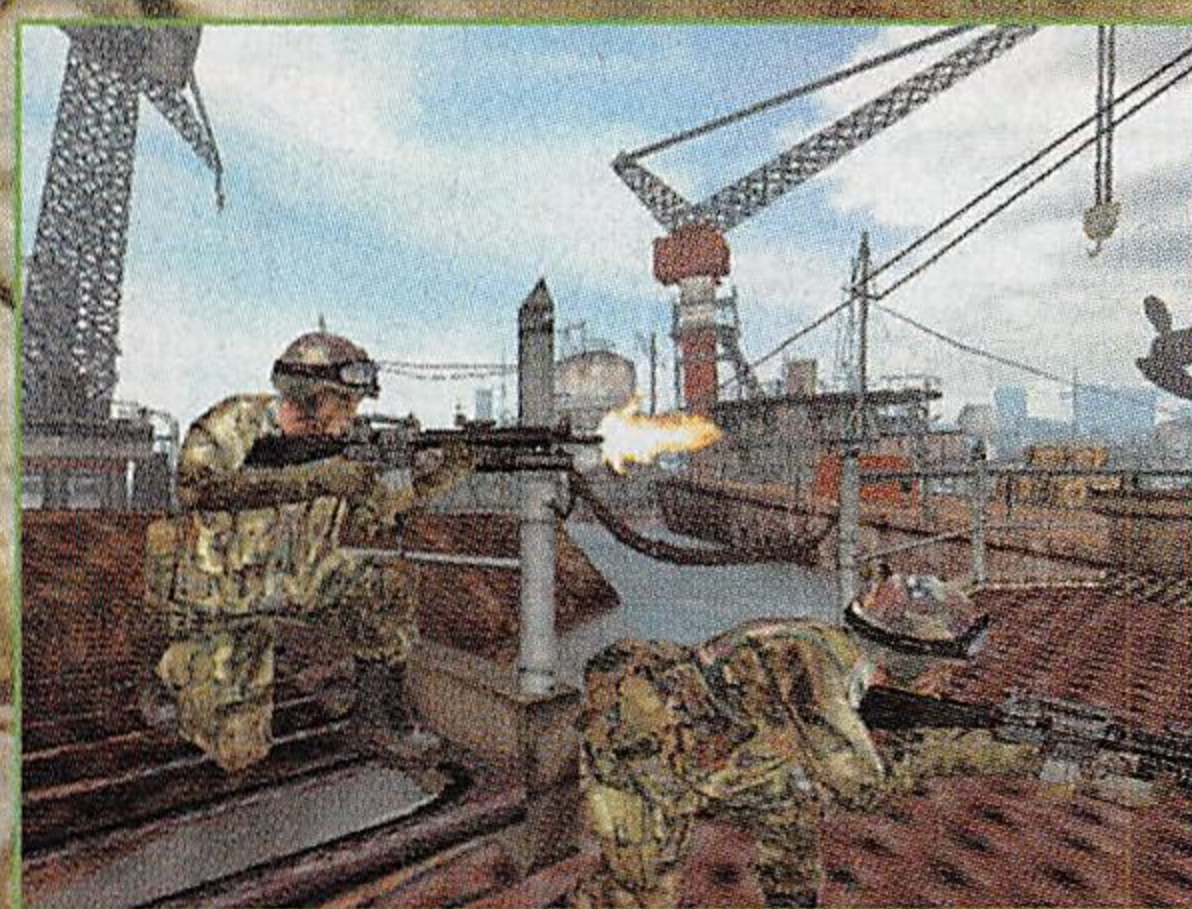
New York — An unusually violent storm system has hit Colombia, bringing heavy rain and strong winds.



EXPERIENCE NEW JUNGLE WARFARE AS THE GHOSTS RESTORE CUBA'S PEACE AND TAKE DOWN AN EVIL COLOMBIAN DRUG CARTEL.



JOIN INTENSE BATTLES WITH PLAYERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD WITH THE NEW PLAYSTATION®2 ONLINE FUNCTIONALITY.



SHOUT OUT COMMANDS TO YOUR ELITE SQUAD OF GHOSTS USING STATE-OF-THE-ART VOICE COMMAND TECHNOLOGY.

THE MOST INTENSE, REALISTIC ACTION, NOW ONLINE FOR PLAYSTATION®2



FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

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Tom Clancy's
GHOST RECON
JUNGLE STORM

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org or
call 1-800-771-3772
for Rating Information.



PlayStation 2



UBISOFT

PS2 PREVIEW 2004

50

PS2 PREVIEW 2004

The new year is finally here, and a long list of amazing games aren't far behind! And did somebody say "PS3 and PSP?" 2004 is gonna rule!

<< WE'LL SEE SOME OF PS2'S BEST GAMES, PLUS A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE >>

12 THE PSP IS COMING!

Want to see what Sony's been cooking up all this time? Then turn over to page 12 to see (and read) all about it!



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND STRATEGY

Wow! There's more fun stuff hidden in this game than... than in... um..... Just turn to page 84, okay?



84

FEATURED PREVIEWS

62



DEAD TO RIGHTS II: HELL TO PAY

Sometimes, blowing away just one gameful of bad guys isn't enough to ease the pain.

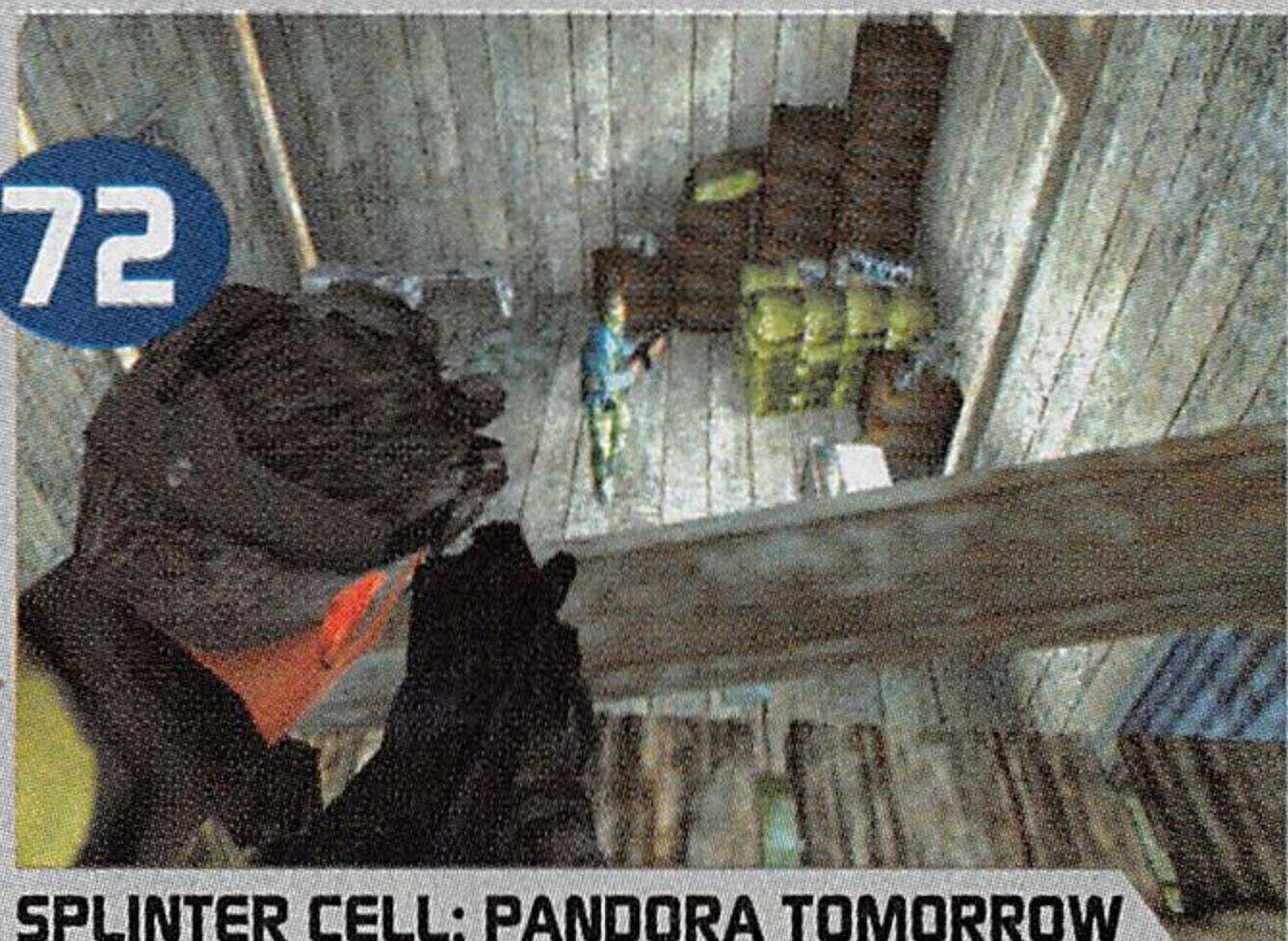
64



THE BARD'S TALE

The PC RPG returns on PS2! (Wow, that's a lot of abbreviations for one sentence...)

72



SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

Somebody opened Pandora's Box, so Sam Fischer has to open up a can.

78



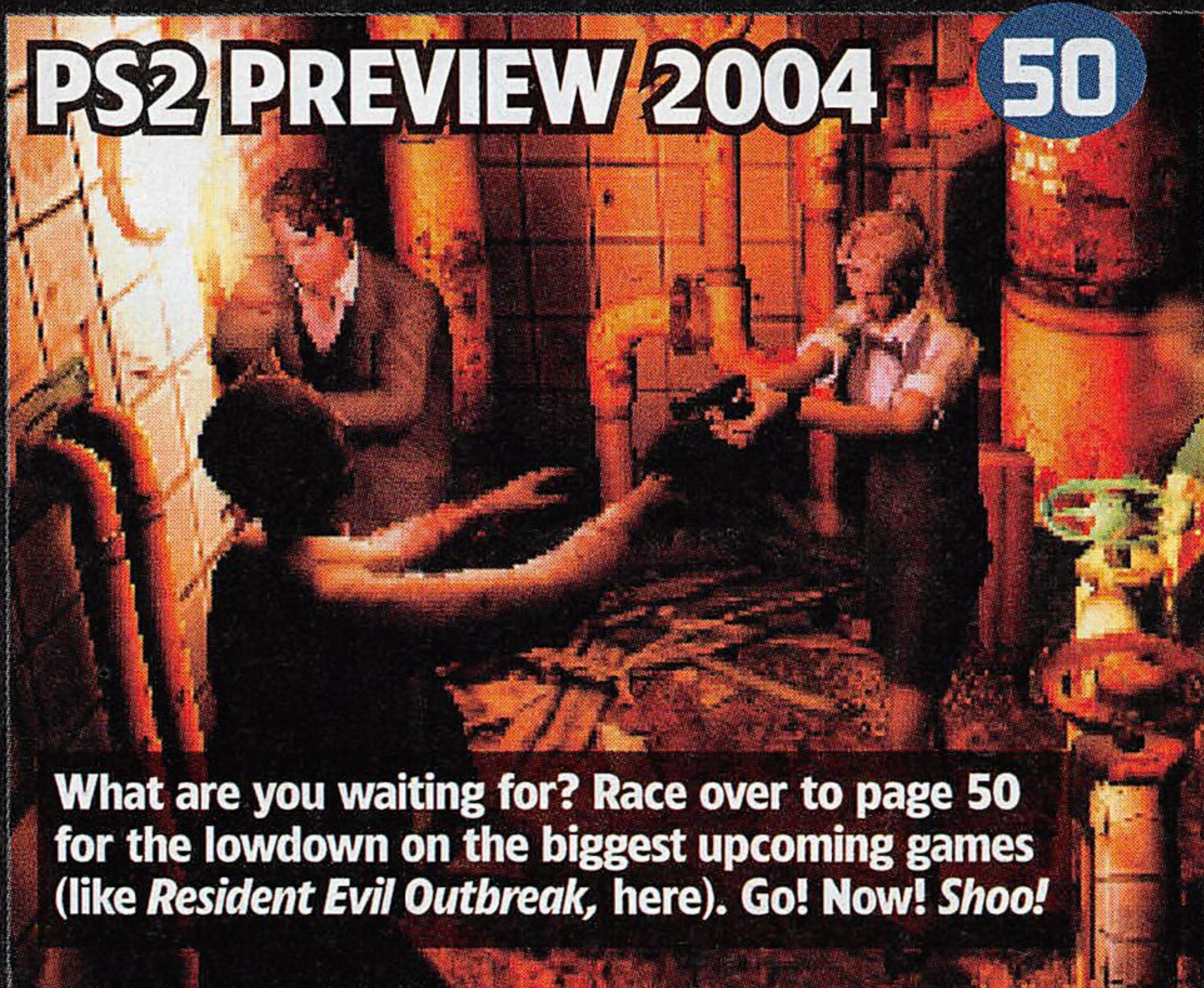
DRIV3R

Grand Theft Auto wishes it had these graphics... Hey, I just got the weird spelling!

CONTENTS

FEATURES

PS2 PREVIEW 2004 50



What are you waiting for? Race over to page 50 for the lowdown on the biggest upcoming games (like *Resident Evil Outbreak*, here). Go! Now! Shoo!

MONITOR

Your inside look at this month's hot topics, gear, and games

TOP STORY

12



The PSP is upon us... and we couldn't get much happier!

CHECKPOINT

18

Your one-stop spot for cool games, movies and gear that's coming your way

REVIEWS

The world's most accurate, in-depth game reviews

GAME OF THE MONTH:

Tony Hawk's U.G. 24
Skitchin' and shreddin'!

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA	32
CABELA'S DANG. HUNTS	48
FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	48
FUGITIVE HUNTER: WOT	46
.hack//QUARANTINE	36
HARDWARE REVIEWS	43
HARRY POTTER ATSS	37
THE HOBBIT	46
LOONEY TUNES: BIA	48
MANHUNT	28
MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: EIS	48
R: RACING EVOLUTION	29
THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT	29
SPAWN: ARMAGEDDON	46

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	29
SPY HUNTER 2	32
TOKYO EXTREME RACER 3	48
TONY HAWK'S U.G.	24
TRUE CRIME: S.O.L.A.	40
VIRTUAL ON: MARZ	48
WHIPLASH	37

PREVIEWS

Your first look at the hottest new PlayStation 2 games

ALIAS	78
ALL STAR BASEBALL 2004	76
THE BARD'S TALE	64
DEAD TO RIGHTS II: HTP	62
DRIV3R	58
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	68
LEISURE SUIT LARRY	76
MEGAMAN X7	80
NBA BALLERS	76
NFL STREET	82
THE PLAGUE	70
SPLINTER CELL P.T.	72
THE SUFFERING	80
SYPHON FILTER O.S.	74

HOW TO

Tips, guides, and cheats that will make you a winner

TONY HAWK'S U.G.	84
SSX 3	88
LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE	88
CONFLICT: D.S. II	88
BACKYARD WRESTLING	88
KYA: DARK LINEAGE	88
SWAT: G.S.T.	88

<< THE GAME WAS SO SCARY, SONY HAD TO PULL ITS COMERCIALS >> pg. 13



PSM
GAME
OF THE
MONTH

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

We've often wondered when the *Tony Hawk* series would start to bottom out. Well, the good news is that *Tony Hawk's Underground* breaks new ground and shows no signs of slowing down!

FEATURED REVIEWS



▲ **MANHUNT** Brutal... deadly... and that's just the gameplay!



▲ **SPY HUNTER 2** We'd love to commute in this baby!



▲ **.hack//QUARANTINE** It's time to go back to "The World!"



▲ **TRUE CRIME** So you think you can make it pay, huh?

THE PSM MISSION STATEMENT

PSM is the magazine for the gaming elite—the hardcore gamers that support and drive this industry. This is *not* a "mass-market" magazine. We don't focus on "fun for the whole family," or waste space interviewing movie stars that have nothing to do with games. That's just not what we're into.

PSM is also proudly independent. We have no official corporate sponsor, so you can trust that our reviews and opinions will always be 100% our own. Our readers always come first, and we would never, ever betray your trust. This is our promise to you, the hardcore PlayStation 2 gamer, who deserves nothing less. Now let's get this issue going!

Home ain't that sweet.



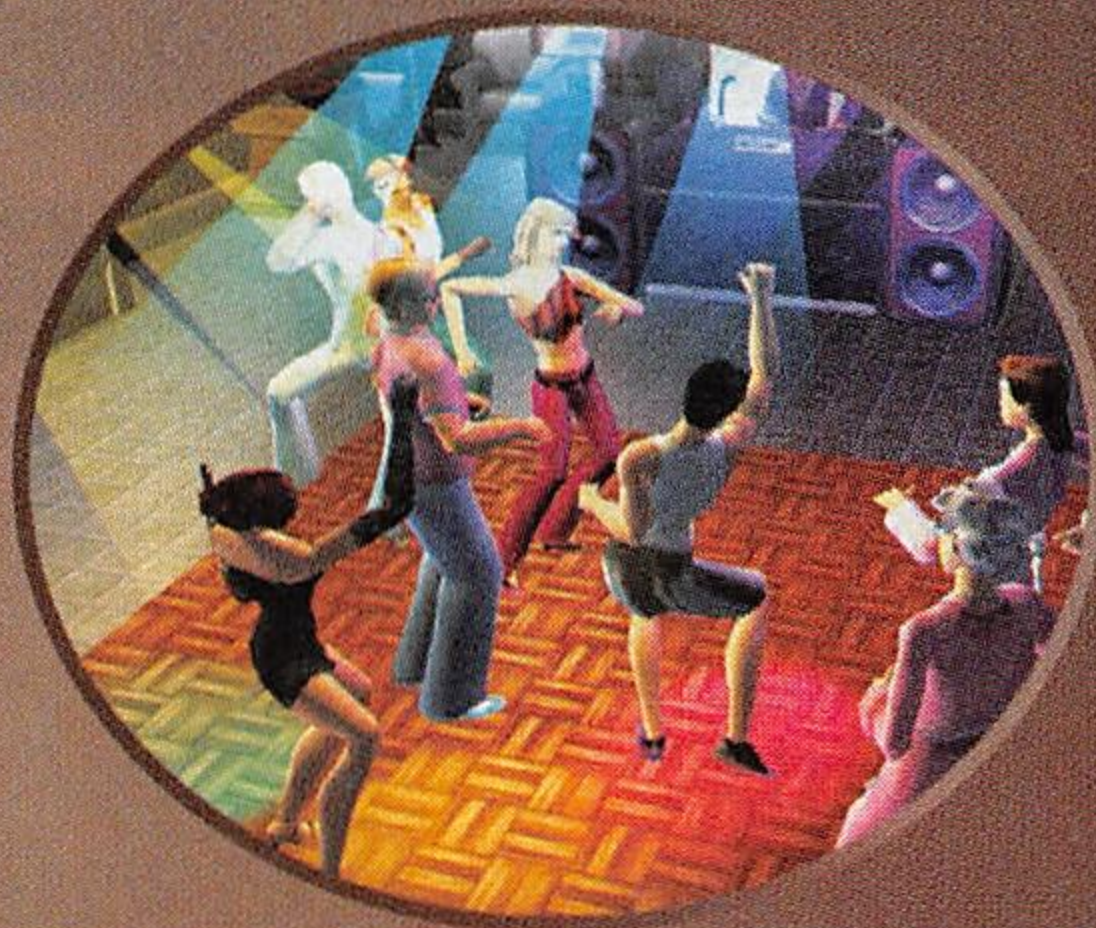
Crude Humor
Mature Sexual Themes
Mild Violence

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY required. Online game play available for the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system only. PlayStation 2 online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately).
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GAME BOY ADVANCE



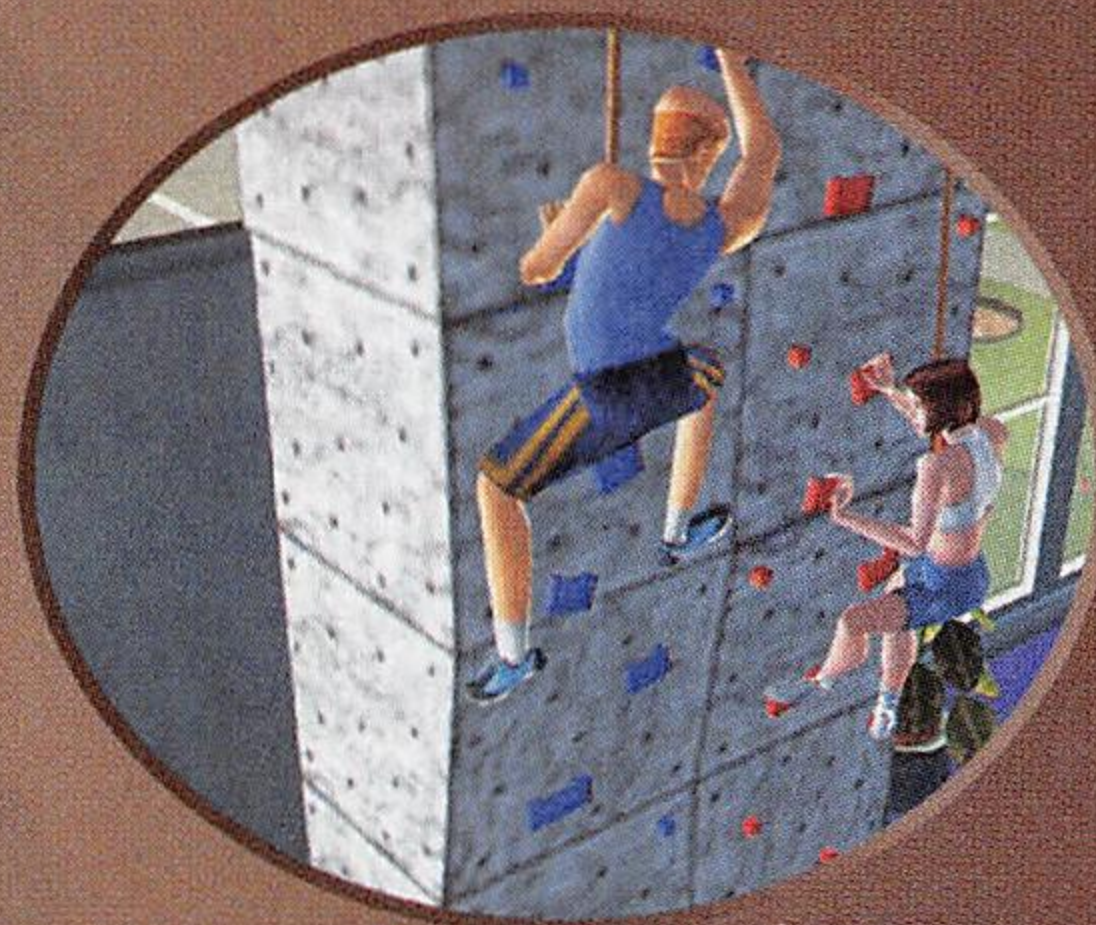
So, where to?



Mona Lott is a dancer at Club Rubb. She digs her man Bing, but, that doesn't mean she won't have some lovin' to spare.



Fran Foofarow lets it all hang out at Pixel Acres. Play your cards right and you'll be seeing more of her. A lot more.



Goldie Toane - flex for her at the gym, and she'll coo over your buff body and maybe tell you a few dirty jokes if you're lucky.



Randy Hart's a regular at Casa Caliente where he loves to give bear hugs on the bear rug. A word to the wise - don't pull his finger.

The Sims
BUSTIN'
OUT

eagames.com



Challenge Everything™



PlayStation®2

FIRST LOOK

WILL THE REAL PSP PLEASE STAND UP?

This is it: the first honest-to-goodness photos of Sony's sexy PSP prototype!

Why wait for E3? That must have been what PlayStation boss Ken Kutaragi was thinking when he addressed Sony stockholders (normally a pretty boring event) and, oh, *threw the first photos of the PSP into his slide show*. Yep, this is the real deal, although when contacted, Sony told PSM that this is still an early version of the design, and that some features could change before launch in 2004's holiday season.

Okay, but the fact still remains: this is pretty much what the PSP is going to look like, so take a good look. Like what you see? We do. You'll have to admit that it's one hot-looking piece of hardware — now you get what Sony meant when they said it wouldn't look like a kid's toy.

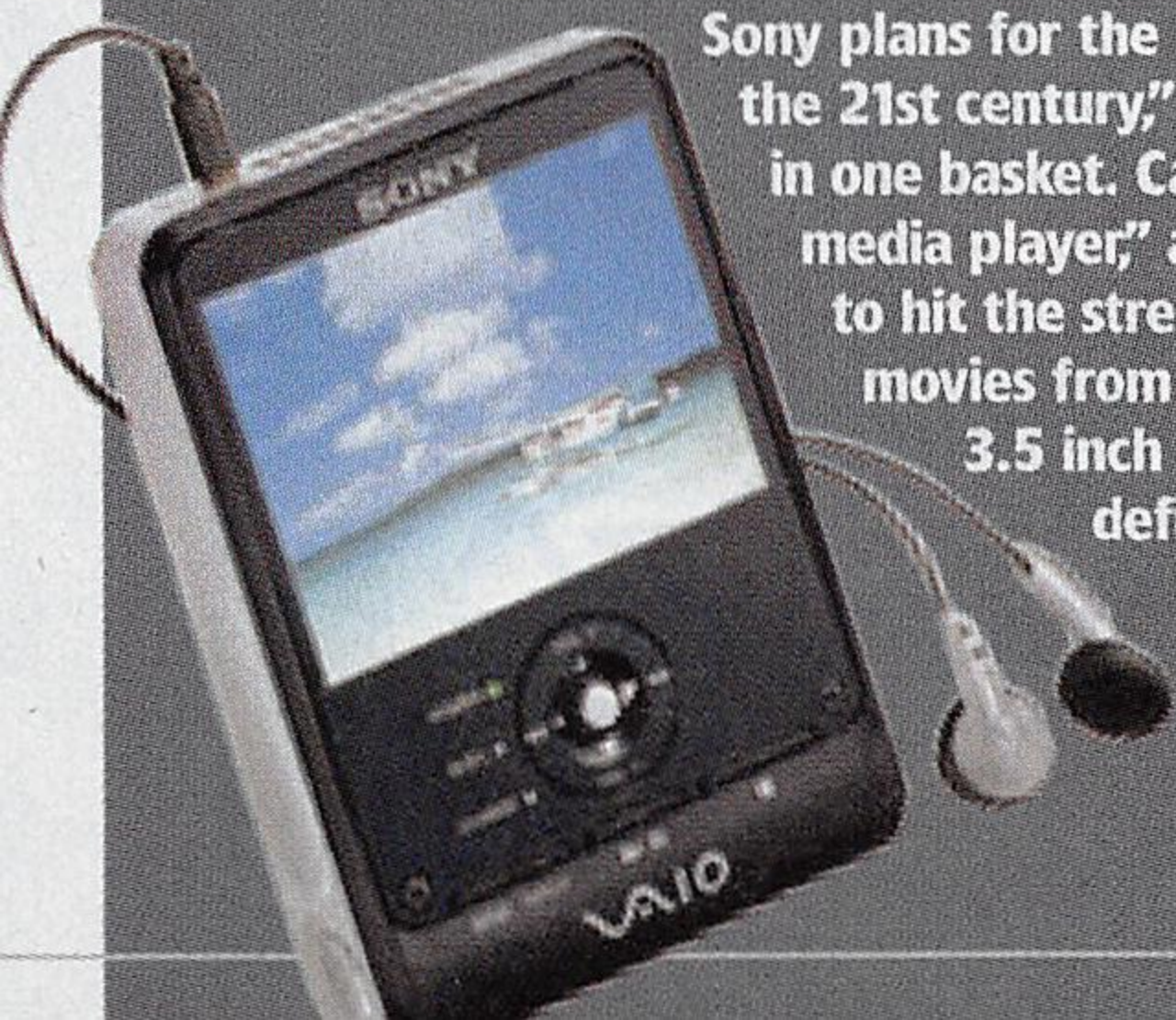
We're still a little unsure of how the flat analog control "disc" and buttons will feel (and where the heck are the shoulder buttons?) but we're confident Sony won't let the thing out the door without making sure it's user-friendly.

One interesting note: this design is totally different from what our development insiders had been told to expect, i.e. a clamshell setup à la the Game Boy Advance SP. With this design, protecting the PSP's screen from scratches will certainly be tricky — maybe it'll come with a soft case, or other type of protective cover. We seem to recall Sony saying something about PSP "not being something you'd want to drop." Heh.

Sony supposedly won't be showing actual PSP hardware until E3 in May, but after this surprise, we wouldn't rule out something slipping out sooner. If it does, you can bet your most precious game save that you'll see it here in Monitor!

PRELUDE TO PSP

Sony plans for the PSP to become "the Walkman of the 21st century," but it's not placing all its eggs in one basket. Case in point: the VAIO "portable media player," a handheld all-in-wonder soon to hit the streets in Japan. It plays music and movies from its 20 gigabyte hard disk on a 3.5 inch color LCD screen. At \$450, it's definitely more costly than PSP will be, but it's yet another sign that Sony's very keen on "owning" portable entertainment.

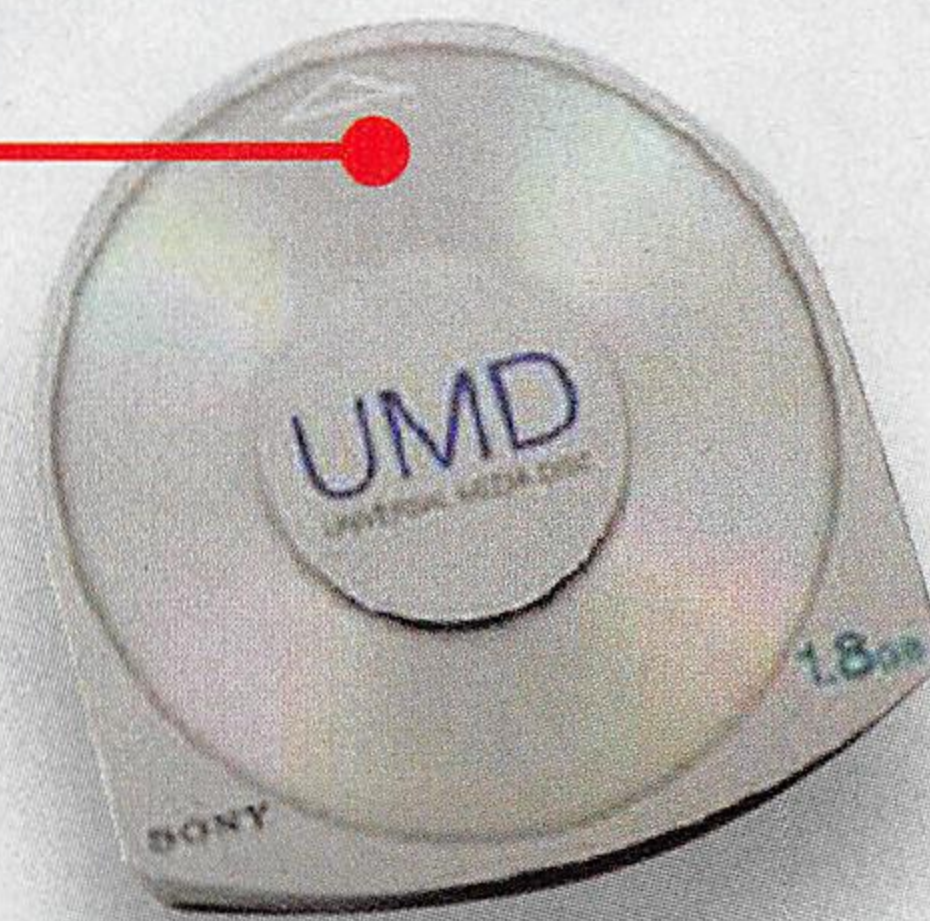


The front of the PSP is so sleek, you might not even notice the buttons — but they're there. Whether the analog stick will be raised or recessed is one of the big questions leading up to the handheld's launch.



You can't get much more straight-forward than the PSP's backside. From what we can tell, the middle portion actually pops open, camcorder-style, to allow for insertion of the UMD (sounds dirty, doesn't it?).

This UMD disc is shown to scale with the PSP. The UMD itself is tiny, so it's a good point of reference for how compact the PSP is.



<< SOME PSP FEATURES COULD CHANGE BEFORE LAUNCH >>

GAME GOODS

MAXIMO MEETS MAI

2004 kicks off with some great gaming collectibles

Can't get enough of the Knight in the heart-print boxer shorts? Toycom has just the thing for the *Maximo* hardcore — brand new 6" action figures. Based on the original game, these are the perfect way to kill time while waiting for Capcom to ship the upcoming sequel.

If perfectly toned fine fighting females are more your thing, then turn your attention to Toycom's *King of Fighters 2000* series of statues. Although they can't be posed, both Blue Mary and Mai Shiranui are highly detailed and ready to kick some serious booty. Authentic to a fault, these re-creations even feature the girls' gravity-defying assets.

► Toycom's *Maximo* figures are some of the most accurate-looking videogame collectibles yet.



>> SOCOM II SETS RECORD

A mere two days after its release, *SOCOM II* was already breaking records by having more than 22,000 players online at the same time. The original *SOCOM* would usually top out at around 14,500 players online. "With *SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs*, we have created one of the most intense and complete online experiences available on any console or personal computer," said Seth Luisi, senior producer, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "*SOCOM II* raises the bar for online gaming, and we are thrilled about the amazing consumer adoption in the first two days."

>> SONY PULLS JAPANESE ADS

When is a survival horror game too scary? Apparently when the TV commercials frighten small children. Sony Japan recently pulled commercials for its new PS2 title, *Siren*. Selling 70,000 copies in its first week, chances are good that the game will be localized for the U.S. sometime in 2004. To check out some footage from the game, head on over to the official site at: www.playstation.jp/scej/title/siren

>> DRIFT RACER SPINS OUT

If you're one of the racing fans who've been waiting for *Kaido Battle: Drift Racer*, we've got some bad news. Sammy Studios has unfortunately decided to shelve the game, despite the amount of promise it was showing. No official reason for the cancellation has been given. Despite the axing, Sammy's other major projects, including *Spy Fiction* and *Seven Samurai 20XX*, remain on track for release this year.

>> EYETOY IN DEMAND

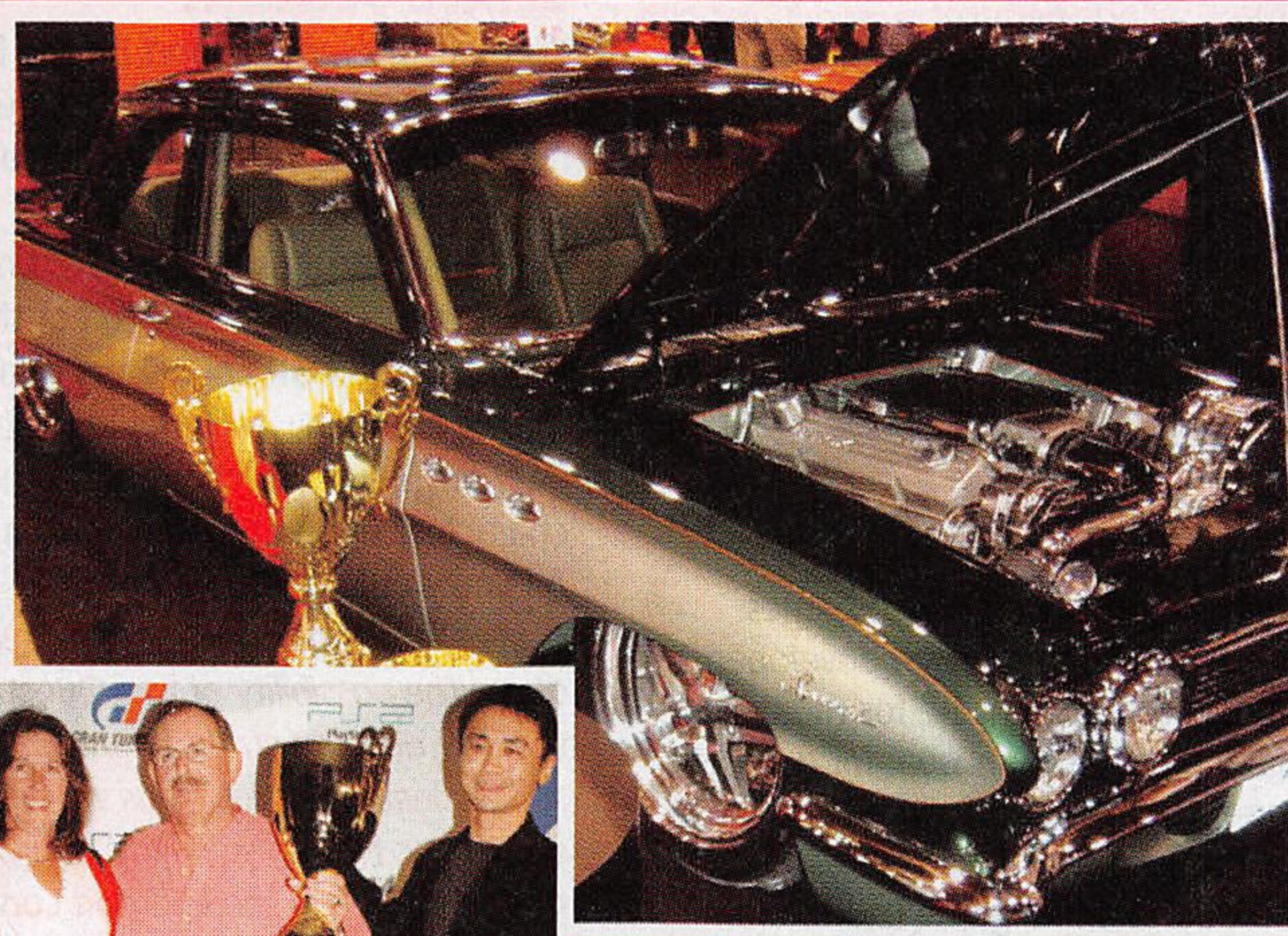
After its crazy-successful release in England, Sony's EyeToy camera and *EyeToy: Play* have been warmly received in the U.S. and, soon, Japan will get its hands on (actually, shouldn't that be "hands off?") the peripheral. Nai Tam, who makes the camera for Sony, announced plans to ramp up production by 14 times to meet the high demand. Could this be one of the first truly successful next-gen peripherals?

HOT TOPIC

Gran Turismo 4 Gets Custom

Couple's classic hotrod goes from garage to game

We have all spent hours customizing our cars in *GT3*, but what if you could actually have your real-life car in the game? For one lucky couple that fantasy will be reality when the game ships this spring. Kazunori Yamauchi, creator of the *Gran Turismo* series, was on hand at the recent 2003 SEMA trade show where he chose one car to be given the "*Gran Turismo 4* Best in Show" award and featured in the upcoming game. The winners were Ted and Sue Richardson with their 1962 Buick Special hot rod. Yamauchi-san must have a soft spot for chrome.



◀ If *GT4* were close to done, Yamauchi-san wouldn't be going on trips. The Richardsons could are less; their car's going to be in the game, whenever it comes out.

HITS & MISSES

What's hot and what's not in the gaming world today

[+]

THE NEW PS2

After the first mention at E3, the redesigned PS2 has finally made it to retail stores. Although it doesn't look different on the outside, it boasts DVD/+R and RW playback as well as being a whole lot quieter — perfect for late night DVD viewings.

SPEAK UP

Innovative use of the USB headset by developers has shown us things we never imagined. From *Manhunt* to *Karaoke Revolution*, third parties are making the headset much more than just a voice chat device.

[-]

DELAY OF GRAN PROPORTIONS

GT4 gets delayed. Japan gets a "prologue" disc to tide them over. We get nothing.

NO GUNCON 2 FOR HDTV

Lightgun games are incredibly cool, but as more gamers get HDTVs, many are finding that the GunCon2 simply does not work. Here's hoping that Namco can develop a high definition compatible lightgun, so those of us who are addicted to shooting things can finally ditch our old analog TVs.

TOYING AROUND

The EyeToy's video message ability is great, but where is the video chat application? The Network Adapter is perfect for this kind of thing. Sony, are you listening?

♥ Hey, is that Michael Clark Duncan? Well, he *does* do a voice in the game...



RUMORS

SEALS ON THE GO

With the new PSP sporting 802.11b support, word around the campfire is that network gaming will be a big push for the upcoming mega-handheld. Hot off the heels of the *SOCOM II* launch, our deep cover agents are starting to hear rumblings about a PSP version. We don't know yet if it will be a port of the original or a brand new game, but either way it is plenty to get excited about.

Our take: *SOCOM* is one of Sony's most successful online games, so a version for the PSP is quite enticing. If the PSP has headset support, we can see this really taking off, especially with the proliferation of wireless hotspots. Can you imagine walking into a Starbucks, grabbing your coffee, connecting your cell phone headset to the PSP and then firing up *SOCOM* for a round of Internet gaming? We can. **Probability: High**

KILLZONE CLONE

In the world of high tech games, it isn't uncommon for a developer to use a single engine for multiple games, but it is unusual for a developer to produce a new engine for a game, and then take that engine and release another game based on it before the original comes out. If that was too confusing, then try this on for size — Guerilla Games, which is developing *Killzone* for Sony, has been

signed to do a third-person action game for Eidos. The catch is that said game will supposedly be using the *Killzone* engine and ship before *Killzone* does.

Our take: If true, this puts Sony in a tight spot. It either has to bump up the release of *Killzone* or put pressure on Eidos to delay its game. If not, Sony could have its thunder stolen. When it comes to new technology, second best just doesn't cut it. **Probability: High**

BIG ADVENTURE, SMALL SCREEN?

Wireless internet support on the PSP is great for games like *SOCOM*, but it is also said to have Sony Online Entertainment a bit excited. After all, *EverQuest* requires an active internet connection to play. A version of the game for the PSP could be a boon for the company, as it would make it easy for players to check in on their characters during the course of a day. All you would need is a hotspot.

Our take: We asked an SOE PR rep about the possibility of *EverQuest* on the PSP and she quickly changed the subject instead of telling us we were off our rocker. Having shipped *Champions* and *Frontiers* on the PS2 and *Lords of EverQuest* on the PC, SOE doesn't have any other major announcements lined up. *EverQuest* for PSP seems like a natural fit. **Probability: Medium**



FIRST INFO BLOODRAYNE IN THE FORECAST

Vampire vixen returns

A surprise hit, the original *BloodRayne* combined action, violence and one of the best looking vampires ever into a blood soaked package that sucked our time away, but still had us clamoring for more.

The recently announced sequel (due out just in time for Halloween 2004) has *BloodRayne* facing off against her evil siblings in an attempt to prevent vampires from taking over the world. Sure, it sounds a lot like the plot from *Blade 2*, but hey, we're not worried about plot, we just want some more Nazi-killing action.

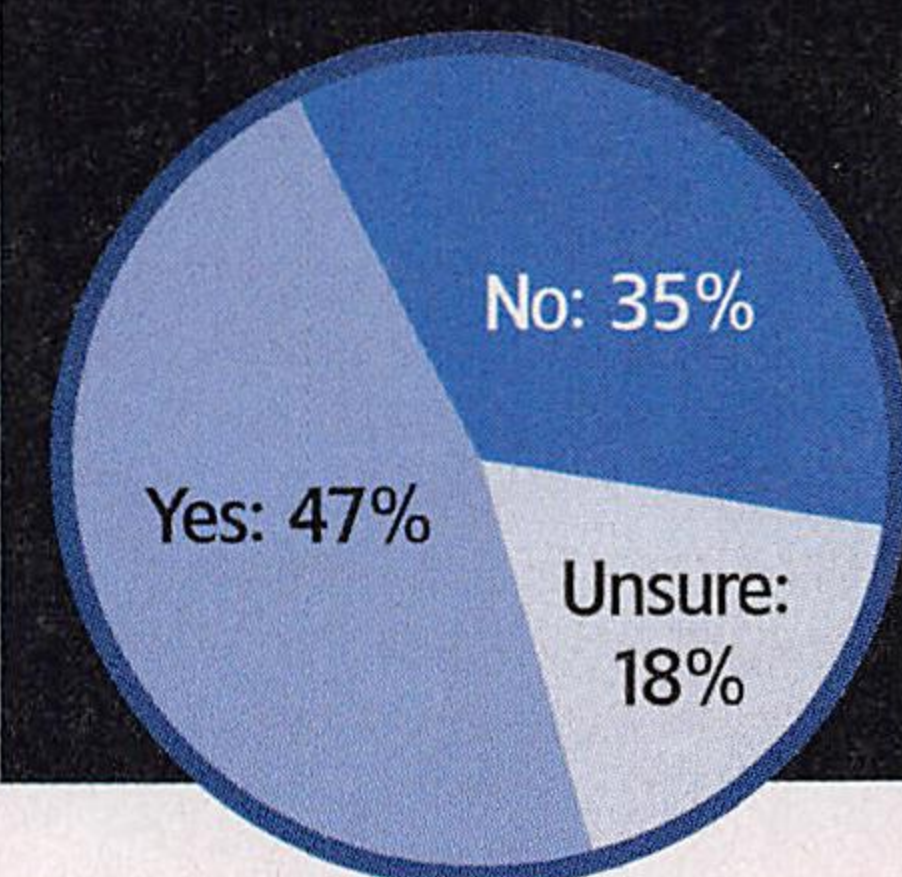
Coinciding with the announcement of the game, Majesco also revealed that a movie deal has been signed. No word on the script or actors just yet, but the concept definitely has potential. If we had our way, Paul Anderson (*Mortal Kombat*, *Resident Evil*, *Alien Vs. Predator*) would direct and the wonderfully tasty Kate Beckinsale would take the starring role — after all, we already know from *Underworld* that she looks good in leather.

WEB POLL

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We asked visitors to our website at www.psmonline.com whether they would pay \$99 for the PS2 HDD with *Final Fantasy XI*. Surprisingly, while more people were ready to get the bundle than not, the ratio of yeas to nays was smaller than we'd expected.

Will you buy the PS2 HDD with FFXI for \$99?

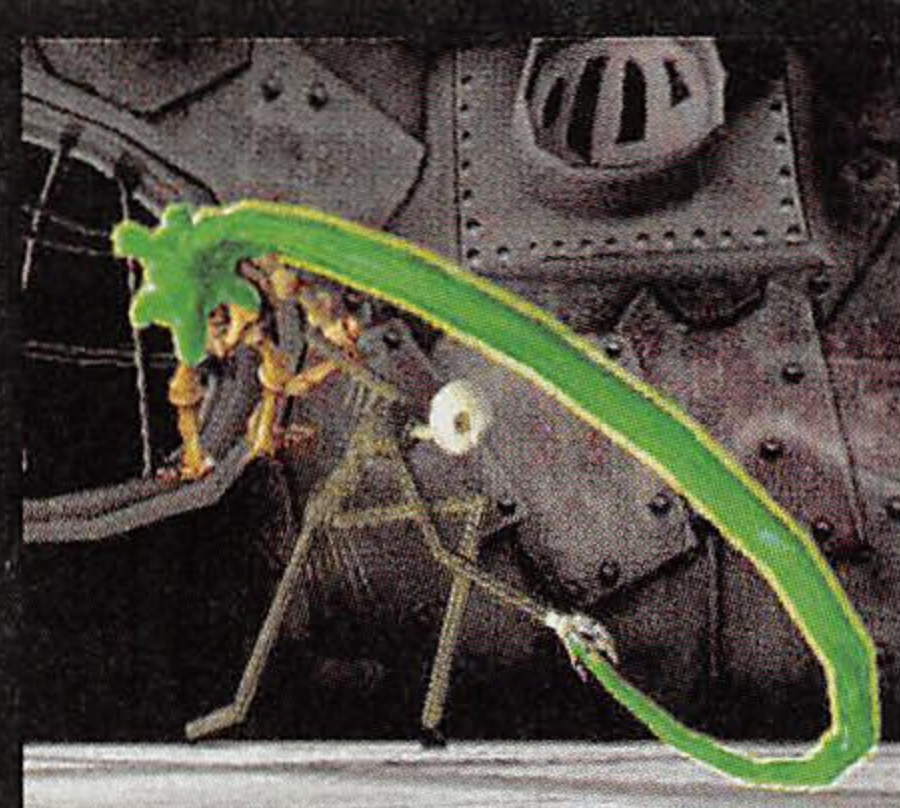


CAPCOM'S NIGHTMARE

Spooky new shots of Halloween havoc

Tim Burton's stop-motion animation extravaganza, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, is coming to a PS2 near you, courtesy of Capcom. Developed in collaboration with Buena Vista Interactive, the game follows the adventures of Jack Skellington, the king of Halloween, as he takes on a new menace threatening his 'hood.

The first actual gameplay shots have surfaced, and the combat system looks interesting, to say the least. It sees Jack using some sort of gooey green "tentacle" that can morph to stab and grab enemies — definitely not your typical action game fare! Expect more on this promising game next issue!



▲ Jack's back, and his gooey weapon looks like one of those novelty stretchy "goo hands" (left). The slimy tentacle can also take on a more deadly form (right).



▲ "Sorry, kid — I'm all out of Unhappy Meals."

VERSUS MODE

MANHUNT

VS

HIDE AND SEEK



ROUND ONE: BACKGROUND

Manhunt: Objective — hide from people trying to kill you

Hide and Seek: Objective — hide from your friends

Advantage: Manhunt

Manhunt: Created by the guys who made *GTA*

Hide and Seek: Created by some bored kids somewhere

Advantage: Manhunt

ROUND TWO: PLAYING THE GAME

Manhunt: You walk up behind people and suffocate them

Hide and Seek: You walk up to people and tap their shoulder

Advantage: Hide and Seek

Manhunt: If someone hears you, they'll kill you

Hide and Seek: If someone hears you, they won't kill you

Advantage: Hide and Seek

ROUND THREE: LIFE LESSONS

Manhunt: Inspires gamers to fear knife-wielding thugs

Hide and Seek: Inspires children to fear other children

Advantage: Manhunt

Manhunt: A great way to hone your sneaking skills

Hide and Seek: A great way to ditch dorky friends

Advantage: Draw

WINNER: MANHUNT

Saving Seven Samurai

Top translator hired for epic action game

As avid gamers are all too aware, translations from Japanese to English are still a rough spot for the industry. There is nothing worse than hitting a dramatic moment, only to have the main character spit out a garbled English phrase. In order to avoid such embarrassing moments, Sammy Studios recently announced the addition of Marc Handler to its San Diego team.

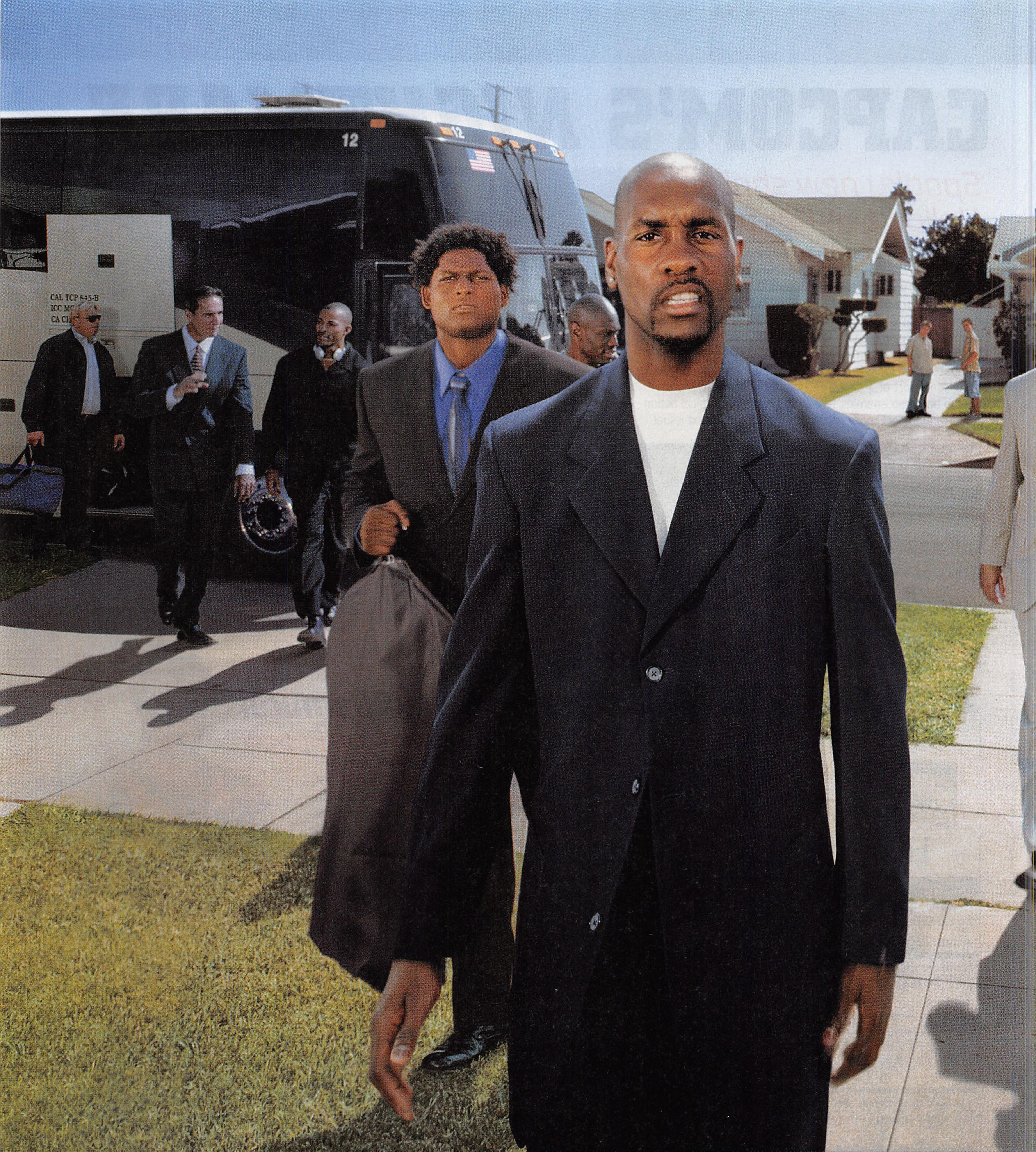
Well known among anime fans, Handler is responsible for translating both *Metropolis* and *Cowboy Bebop*, as well as producing screenplays for *Transformers* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Although Handler will not be creating the script, he will be ensuring that the English text is true to the original. In addition to Handler, Sammy has retained a whopping 40 different actors to voice the game.

"Since the game is based on a masterpiece action film, it was very important to us to keep the original story intact, but still bring a level of artistic quality to the translation from Japanese," said Brian Glazebrook the producer of *Seven Samurai 20XX*.



► *Seven Samurai 20XX* is actually a retelling of the original film, which explains its futuristic setting.



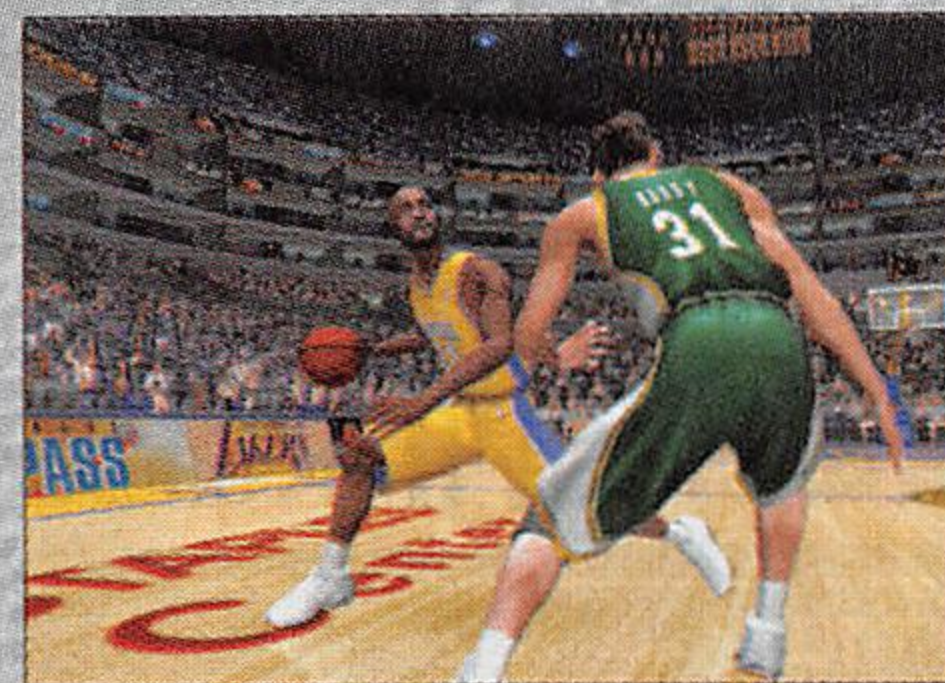
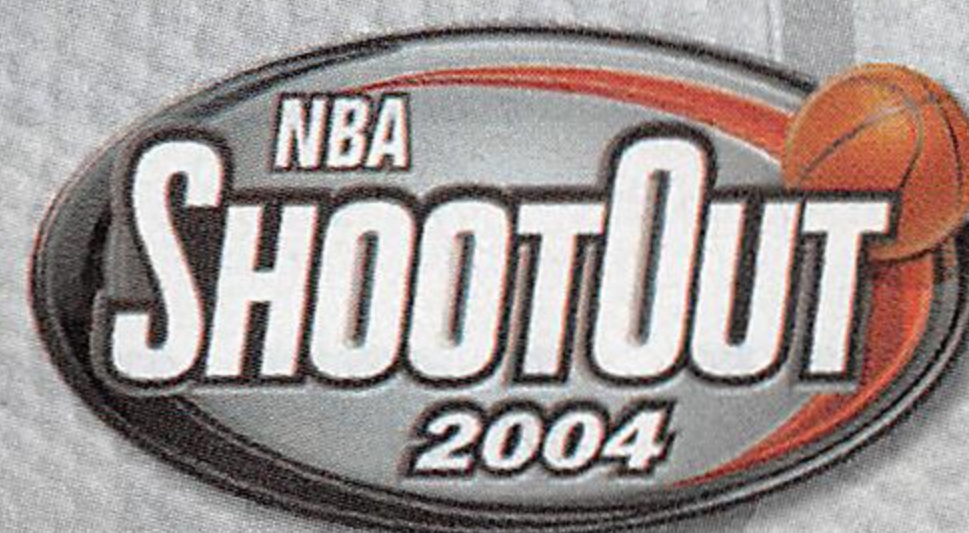


PlayStation®2



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CHECKPOINT

You've found it: your one-stop spot for all the best stuff headed your way
(Please keep in mind that release dates do change—don't blame us if they do!)



Current Releases

TITLE	GENRE	PUBLISHER
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Action	Interplay
Daredevil: The Man Without Fear	Action	Encore
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Action	Interplay
Fast and the Furious	Racing	Vivendi
Lord of the Rings: Treason of Isengard	Action	Vivendi
Mafia	Action	Gathering
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Action	Capcom
Sonic Heroes	Action	Sega
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	Action	TDK
Supercar GT	Racing	EA
Syphon Filter Omega Strain	Action	SCEA
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: JS	Action	Ubi Soft
X-Files: Resist or Serve	Action	Vivendi

Want some intense action? Check out *Syphon Filter Omega Strain*!

PSM Game Tracker



StarCraft: Ghost

Publisher: Blizzard Type: Action Release Date: Spring

As always, Blizzard has kept this title very close to its chest, but everything we've seen has been incredibly promising. While we don't think the game will spawn a series — can you imagine *StarCraft: Zerg?*, no neither can we — *Ghost* should be an excellent blend of sci-fi and stealth action.

Wrath Unleashed

Publisher: LucasArts Type: Strategy Release Date: Spring

Old-school gamers may remember a Commodore release by the name of *Archon*. This little ditty took the concept of chess, but spiced it up with actual fighting. *Wrath Unleashed* is the spiritual successor to that game. It is the closest you're going to get to *Archon II*.



Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy

Publisher: Midway Type: Action Release Date: Summer

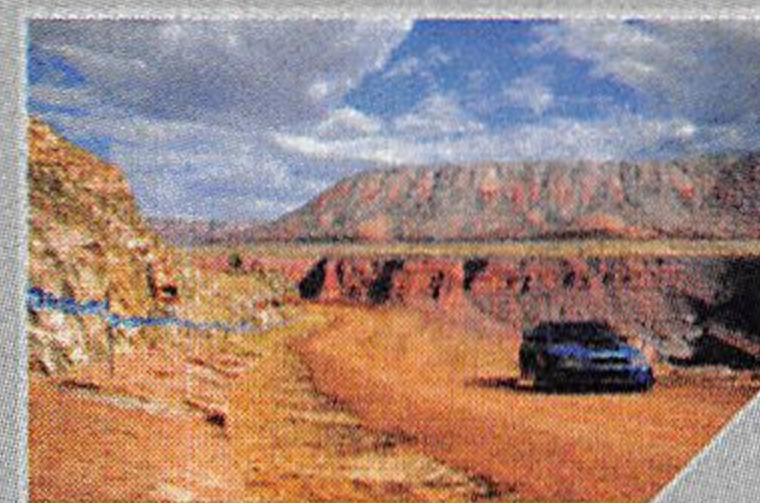
Originally titled *ESPionage*, *Psi-Ops* has gone through a major overhaul after the developers determined that the original game simply wasn't fun enough. Heavy on action and low on stealth, the game makes good use of Psi powers, such as Telekinesis and Mind Control.



Gran Turismo 4

Publisher: SCEA Type: Racing Release Date: TBA

Currently slated for a summer release, the game has seen its ship date slip more than once. Definitely worth waiting for, we have to be just a bit jealous of Japanese gamers who are getting the *Prologue* disc to enjoy.



Gradius V

Pub: Konami Type: Shooter Release Date: Spring

When it comes to shooters, you simply cannot go wrong with Treasure. Responsible for some of the most loved (and most difficult!) games out there, Treasure has yet to ship a dud in this genre. Konami couldn't have picked a better developer to handle the *Gradius* revival.



February's Releases

TITLE	GENRE	PUBLISHER
Air Force Delta Strike	Action	Konami
All Star Baseball 2005	Sports	Acclaim
Black 9	Action	Majesco
Champions of Norrath	RPG	SOE
Cy Girls	Action	Konami
Extreme Force	Action	Namco
Firefighter F.D. 18	Action	Konami
Gradius V	Action	Konami
Ice Nine	Action	BAM!
Lobo	Action	Kemco
Lupin the Third: TOTSK	Action	Bandai
MX Unleashed	Sports	THQ
NBA Ballers	Sports	Midway
Pitfall Harry	Action	Activision
Rise to Honor	Action	SCEA
Seven Samurai 20XX	Action	Sammy Studios
Star Ocean III: Till the End of Time	RPG	Square Enix
StarCraft: Ghost	Action	Blizzard
Trivial Pursuit Unhinged	Action	Atari
Wrath Unleashed	Strategy	LucasArts

Hey, you can see what's left of your house from up here in *Air Force Delta Strike*!

WHAT YOU SHOULD BE PLAYING



1. SOCOM II

Pub: Sony CEA Dev: Zipper Interactive Type: Action
If you have a network adapter, there is no reason to not have *SOCOM II*. Bigger, better, and badder than the original, this is the ultimate co-op game.



2. Tony Hawk's Underground

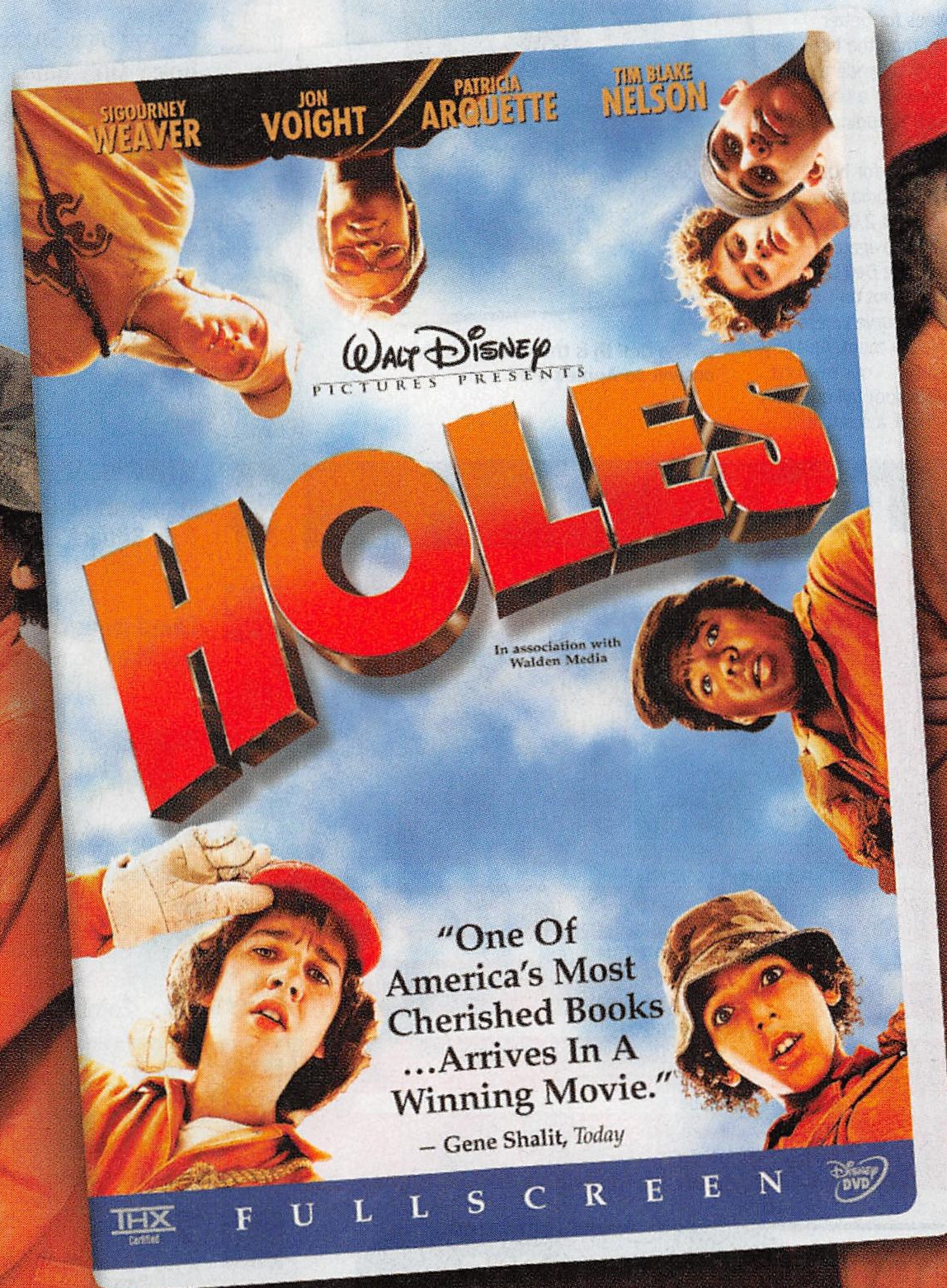
Publisher: Activision Developer: Neversoft Type: Sports
The best skateboarding engine ever, coupled with the ability to put your own face on the main character makes this the best *Tony Hawk* yet.



3. MANHUNT

Pub: Rockstar Dev: Rockstar North Type: Action
With innovative use of the USB headset, combined with enough violence to make Leatherface look tame, *Manhunt* taps the hidden sadist inside all of us.

Dig It On And Video



**Discover A Heap Of DVD
Special Features Including:**

- Gag Reel • Deleted Scenes
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CASTING BY AMANDA MACKAY JOHNSON, C.S.A. AND CATHY SANDRICH GELFOND, C.S.A. MUSIC BY KARYN RACHTMAN COSTUME DESIGNER AGGIE GUERARD RODGERS EDITOR TOM NORDBERG AND JEFFREY WOLF, A.C.E. PRODUCTION DESIGNER MAHER AHMAD DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHEN ST. JOHN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARTY EWING LOUIS PHILLIPS
SCREENPLAY BY LOUIS SACHAR BASED ON THE NOVEL BY R. L. STINE PRODUCED BY MIKE MEDAVOY ANDREW DAVIS TERESA TUCKER-DAVIES LOWELL BLANK DIRECTED BY ANDREW DAVIS

PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
SOME MATERIAL MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN
For Violence, Mild Language And Some Thematic Elements
For rating reasons, go to www.filmratings.com
Bonus Material Not Rated



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Cool Stuff

Here's a look at some of the hottest new gear and goodies you should keep an eye out for

Dell DJ

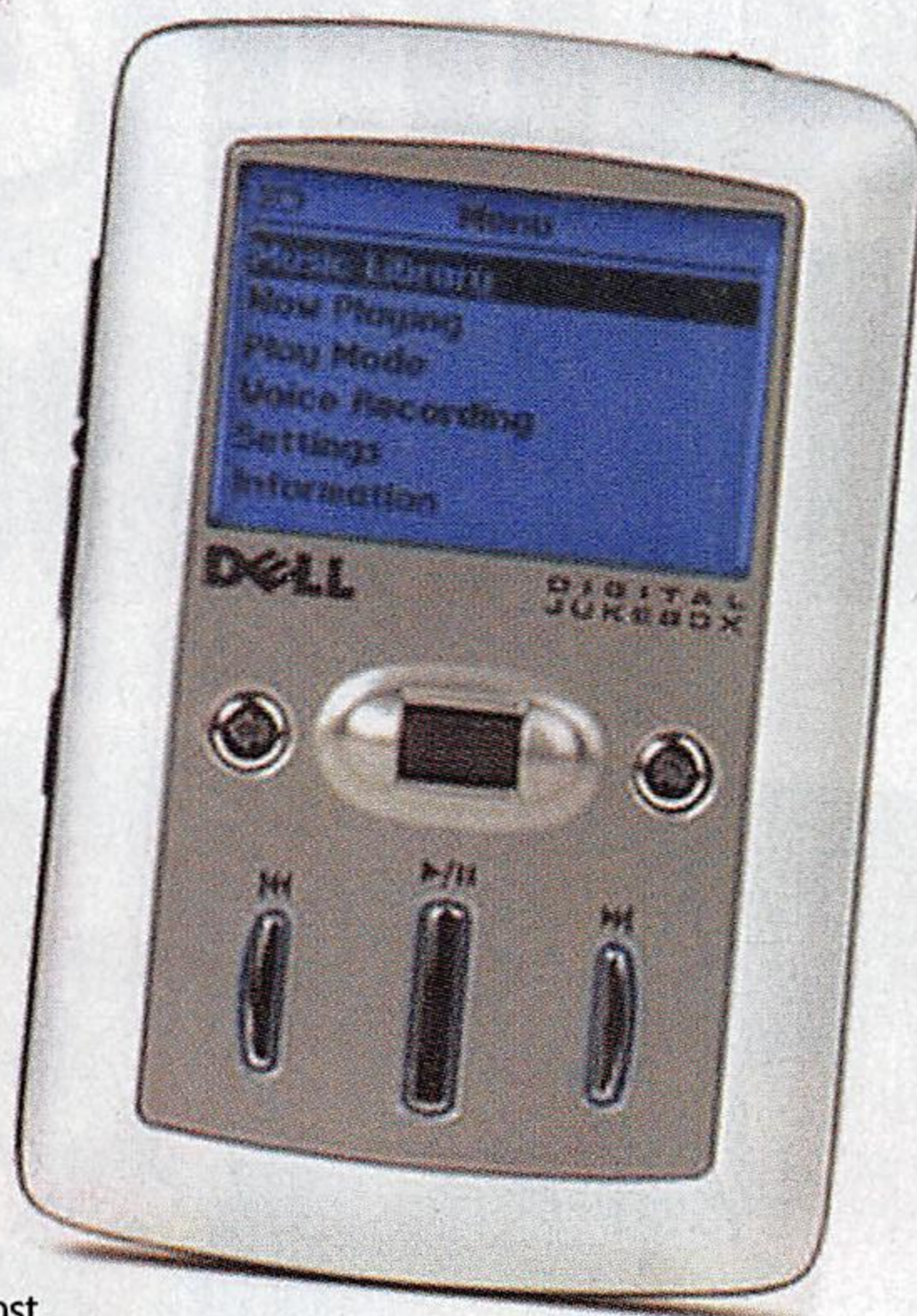
From: Dell
Price: \$249
Available: Now

Apple's iPod may be fancy, but it's also expensive. What's a music lover to do? Turn to the Dell DJ for something just as nice, but without the crazy price. At a mere \$249 for the 15 GB model (a 20 GB model is also available for \$329) the entry level DJ is \$50 cheaper and has 50% more storage space than the cheapest iPod.

The DJ comes bundled with MusicMatch 8.1, which provides an integrated solution for ripping, burning and downloading music. Tracks bought from MusicMatch are saved as 160 kbps WMV files,

which provides for better audio quality than the MP3 format. A \$20 upgrade to the software allows for a bevy of extra features, including high speed ripping.

With support for both MP3 and WMV audio files, a high speed USB 2.0 port and an easy to navigate menu system, the Dell DJ hits that sweet spot on the technology curve where cost and convenience meet. And hey, it's also durable — our test unit survived a four foot fall onto the sidewalk without a scratch!



▲ The Dell DJ is the thrifty man's answer to Apple's iPod.

Hot In January

TOP FIVE DVD RELEASES



OUR TOP PICK:

AMERICAN WEDDING
01/02/04

Twenty five minutes of extra footage and the utter lack of a rating have always meant good things for the *Pie* films. This one is no exception.

2 - Stargate SG-1 Season 5 - 01/20/04

The fifth season of this sci-fi classic marks a major turning point for the series with the introduction of Anubis as the new big bad guy.

3 - Freddy vs. Jason - 01/13/04

This battle of the horror titans might be a cheese-fest in the extreme, but it makes a great guilty pleasure for fans of either series.

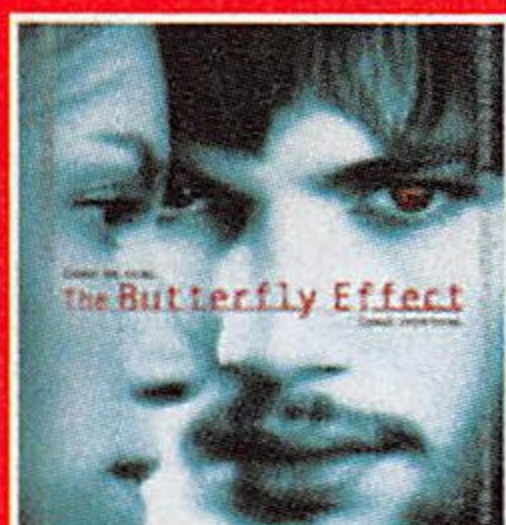
4 - The Shield Season 2 - 01/06/04

Jaded cops who bend the rules and criminals who simply don't care make this one of the grittiest shows on TV.

5 - Star Trek VI - Special Collector's Edition - 01/27/04

Paramount has finally gotten around to giving this movie its due, complete with commentary and loads of bonus features.

TOP FIVE NEW MOVIES



OUR TOP PICK:

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT
01/23/04

Remember when Homer kept going back in time trying to fix the future, but kept screwing things up? Same premise, with a bigger budget and this time the hero is trying to save a girl.

2 - Mindhunters - 01/23/04

This action/suspense flick owes much to *Ten Little Indians*, only here the players are FBI agents and one whacked out serial killer.

3 - Along Came Polly - 01/16/04

Yes, it's a romantic comedy, with plenty of visual gags and lowbrow humor. If it is as good as *Meet the Parents*, we'll be happy.

4 - First Daughter - 01/09/04

The daughter of the President goes to college and falls in love with the amazingly young Secret Service agent assigned to spy on her.

5 - Torque - 01/16/04

Originally set for release in January of 2003, this Ice Cube vehicle has murder, mayhem and plenty of fast motorcycles.

Readers' Most Wanted

1 METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami KCEJ
Release Date: TBA



#1 Last Month

Do you play Snake or Big Boss? Only time will tell.



2 GRAN TURISMO 4

Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Polyphony Digital
Release Date: TBA



#4 Last Month

We wish our cars got put into the game.



3 KINGDOM HEARTS 2

Publisher: Square Enix US
Dev: Square Enix
Release Date: TBA



#3 Last Month

Cloud loves Disneyland, just like the rest of us!



4 FINAL FANTASY XI

Pub: Sony CEA Dev: Square Enix
Release Date: March 2004



#5 Last Month

Basically free with the hard drive. Cool!

5 RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK

Pub: Capcom Developer: Capcom
Release Date: Spring 2004



#9 Last Month

Zombies. Online. 'Nuff said.

NEW 6

New This Month

BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE II

Publisher: Interplay Developer: Black Isle
Release Date: January

Everyone's favorite action-RPG returns.

NEW 7

New This Month

DRIVER 3

Publisher: Atari Developer: Reflections Interactive
Release Date: Spring 2004

It's fun playing the bad guy.

NEW 8

New This Month!

XENOSAGA II

Pub: Namco Developer: Namco
Release Date: TBA

Will this massive RPG ever come stateside?

NEW 9

New This Month!

STAR OCEAN III: TILL THE END OF TIME

Publisher: Square Enix Developer: Tri-Ace
Release Date: February

Floating across an ocean of stars.

NEW 10

New This Month!

MAFIA

Publisher: Gathering Developer: Illusion Softworks
Release Date: January

One family that never lets you down.

CAST YOUR VOTE!

Visit www.psmonline.com and pick your most wanted game from our list of the hottest upcoming releases. We'll tally the results, and print 'em here each issue!

NPD Funworld

TRSTS

SALES CHARTS

TOP 10 PS2 GAMES FOR SEPTEMBER

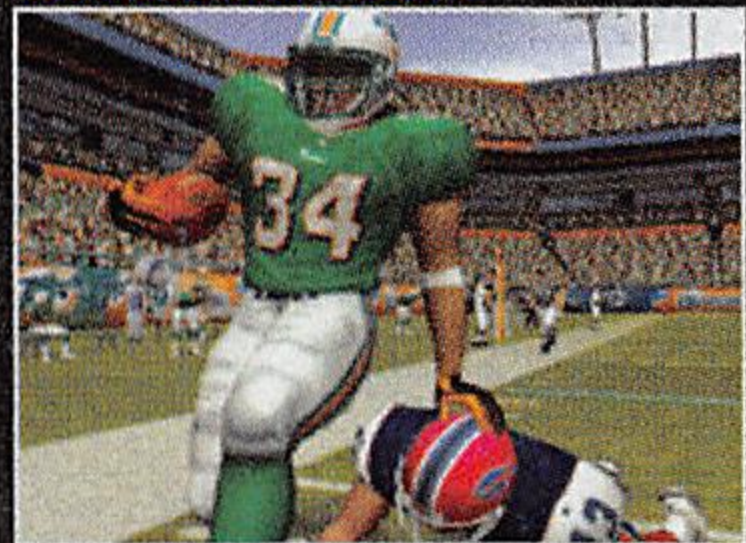
1. Madden NFL 2004



2. Tiger Woods PGA 2004
3. Soul Calibur II
4. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
5. SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs
6. NASCAR Thunder 2004
7. ESPN NFL Football
8. NCAA Football 2004
9. Grand Theft Auto 3
10. Tony Hawk 4

TOP 10 SPORTS GAMES/SEPT.

1. Madden NFL 2004



2. Tiger Woods PGA 2004
3. ESPN NFL Football
4. NCAA Football 2004
5. Tony Hawk 4
6. NHL 2004
7. Deer Hunter 2004
8. ESPN NHL Hockey
9. Hot Shots Golf 3
10. NASCAR Thunder 2004

OVERALL TOP 10 FOR SEPTEMBER

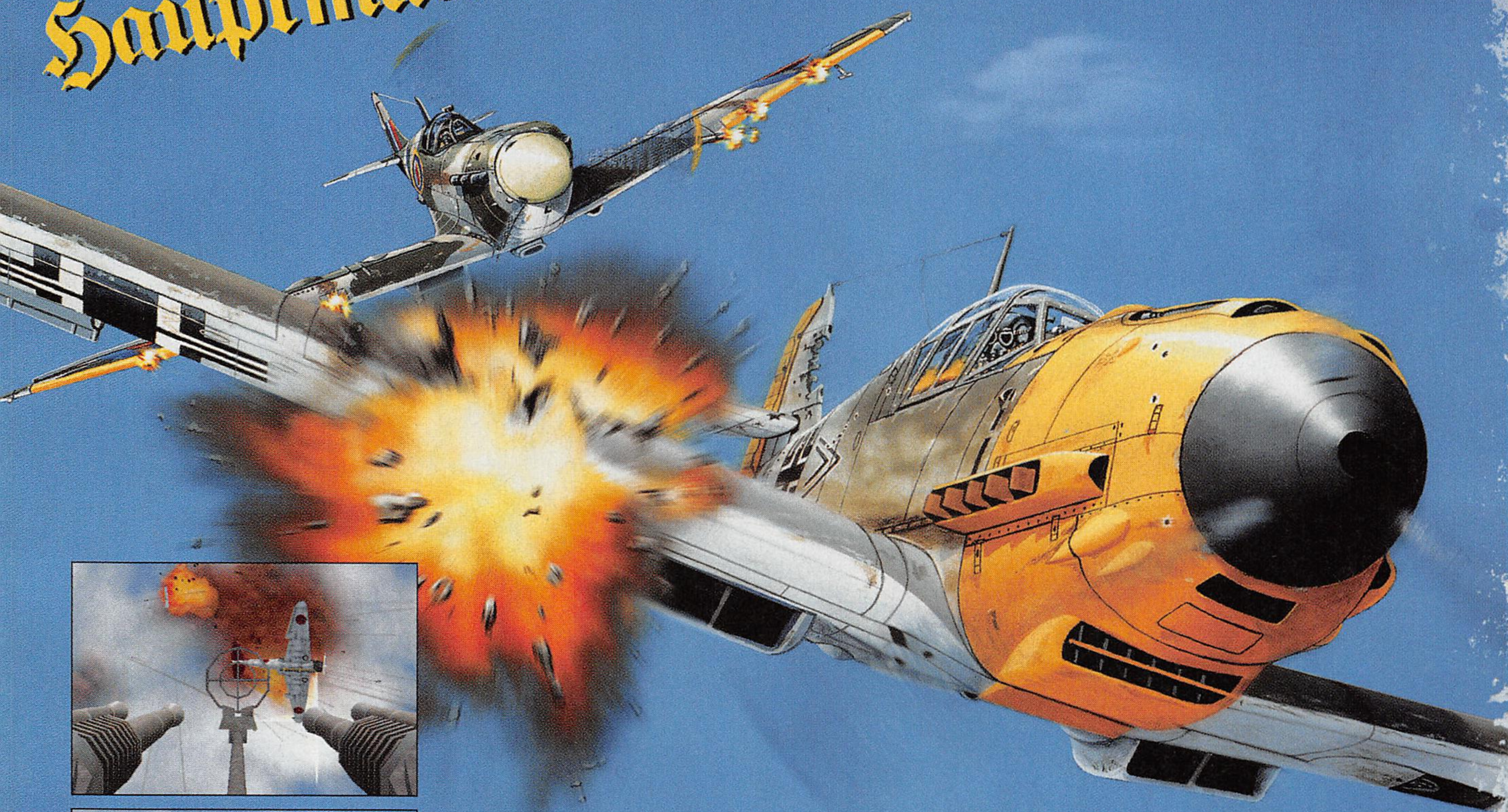
1. Madden NFL 2004 (PS2)



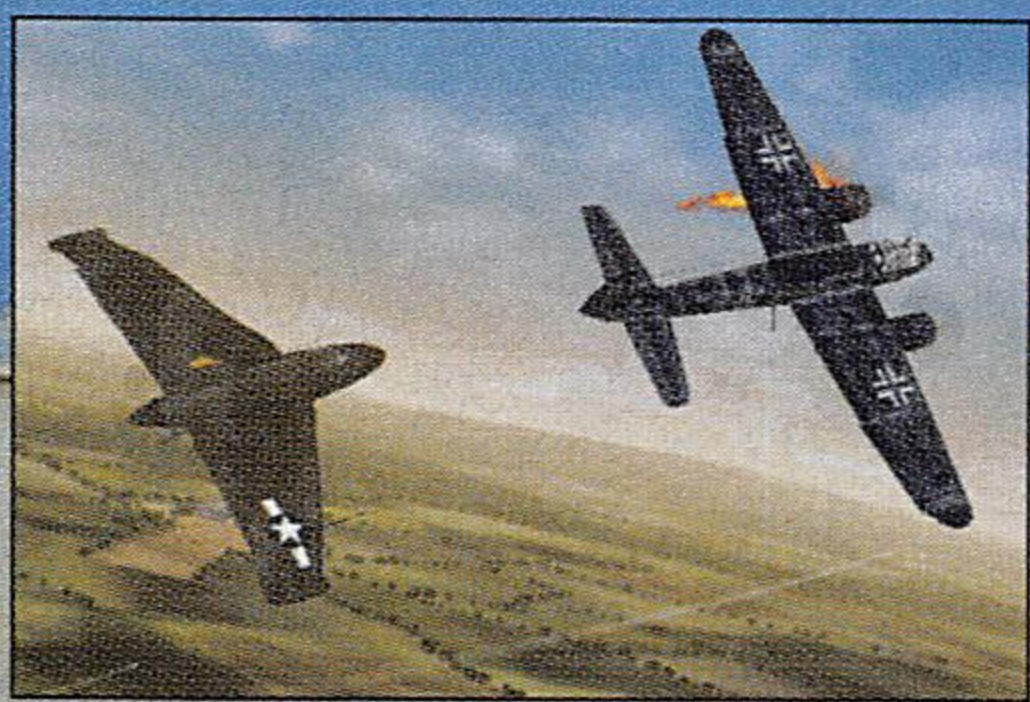
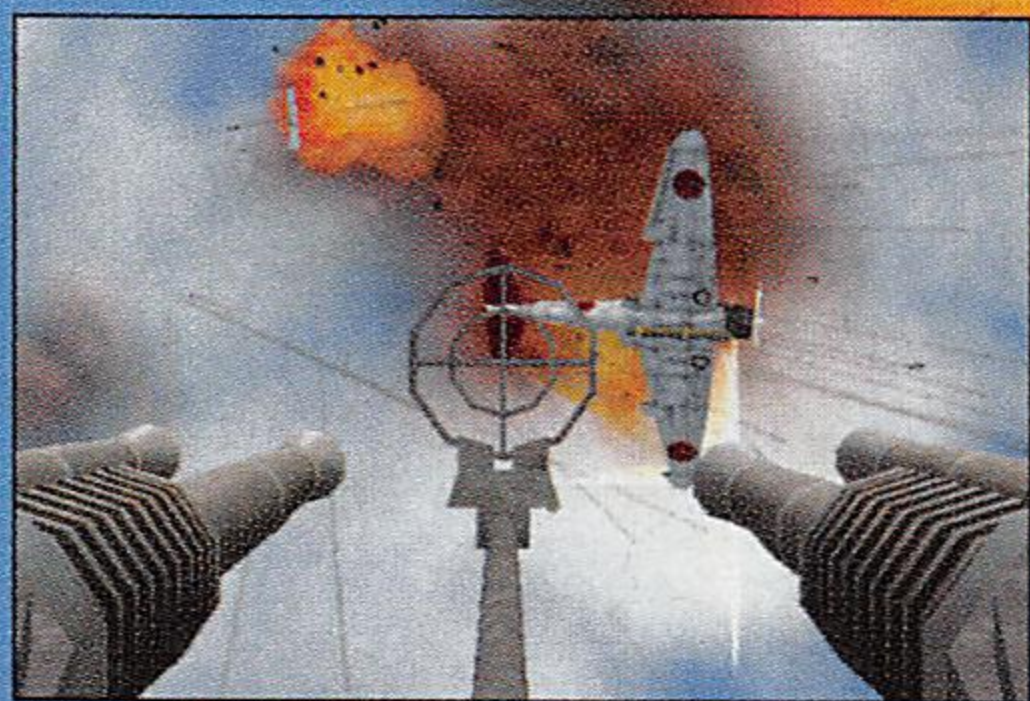
2. Final Fantasy Tactics (GBA)
3. Tiger Woods PGA 2004 (PS2)
4. Soul Calibur II (PS2)
5. Soul Calibur II (GCN)
6. GTA: Vice City (PS2)
7. Soul Calibur II (Xbox)
8. ESPN NFL Football (Xbox)
9. Madden NFL 2004 (Xbox)
10. SOCOM: SEALs (PS2)

Achtung!

Hauptmann — Ihr Flugzeug brennt*



* (Translation: Hey, Captain! Your airplane's on fire.)



The fortunes of German pilots everywhere are about to take a severe downturn. In this intense WWII flight-action game, from Secret Weapons of Luftwaffe®, TIE-Fighter®, and X-Wing® creator Lawrence Holland, you'll join a secret, elite fighter squadron. Your mission: thwart the most insidious plans of the Third Reich. Over Europe and other theaters, you'll pilot nearly two dozen authentic aircraft, and face over 30 air-to-air and air-to-ground combat scenarios. And you won't need any flight training. Just nerves of steel, a steady hand, and a burning desire to rid the world of tyranny, one mission at a time.

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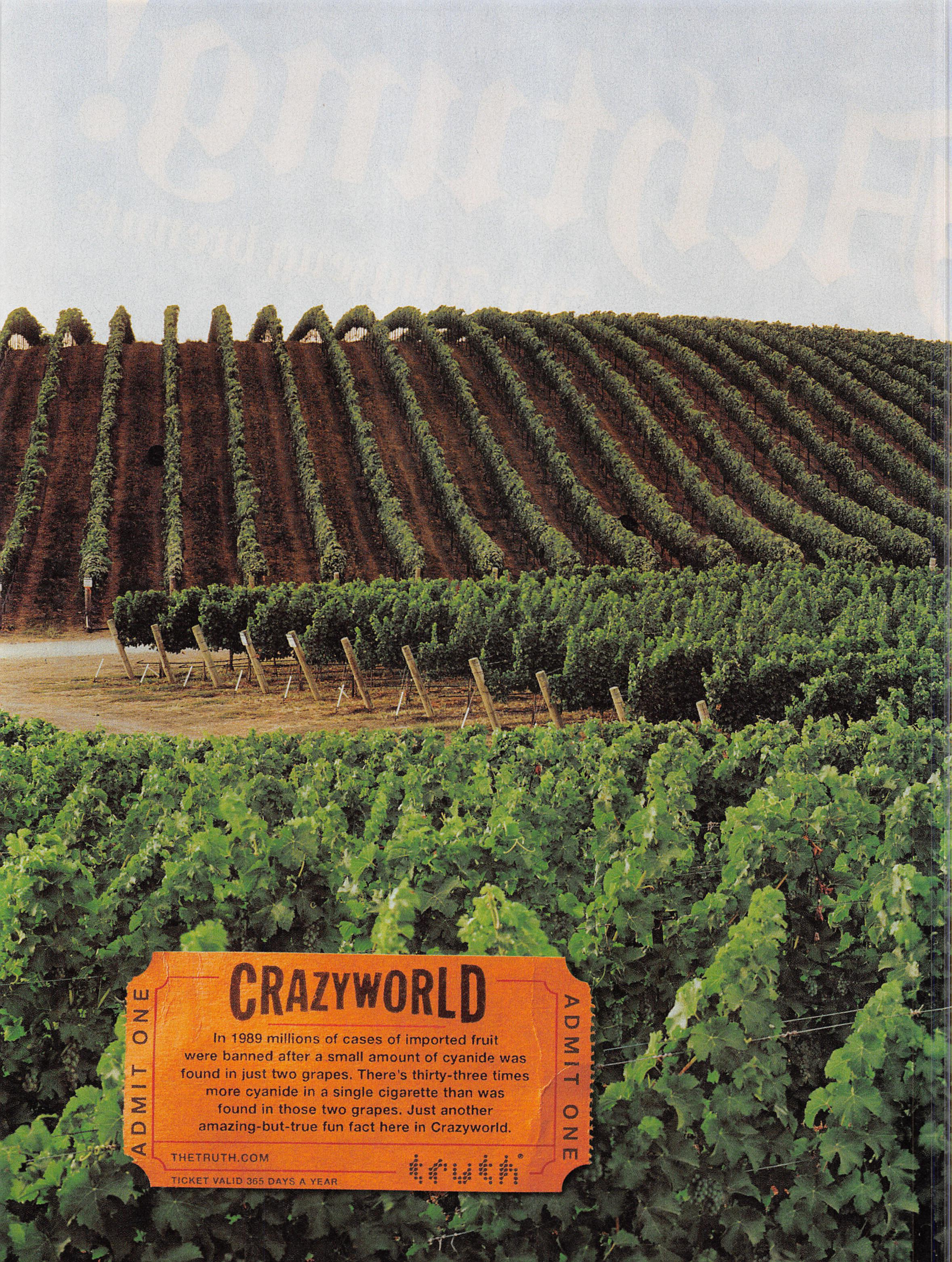
**SECRET
WEAPONS
—OVER—
NORMANDY**



PlayStation®2



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ADMIT ONE

CRAZYWORLD

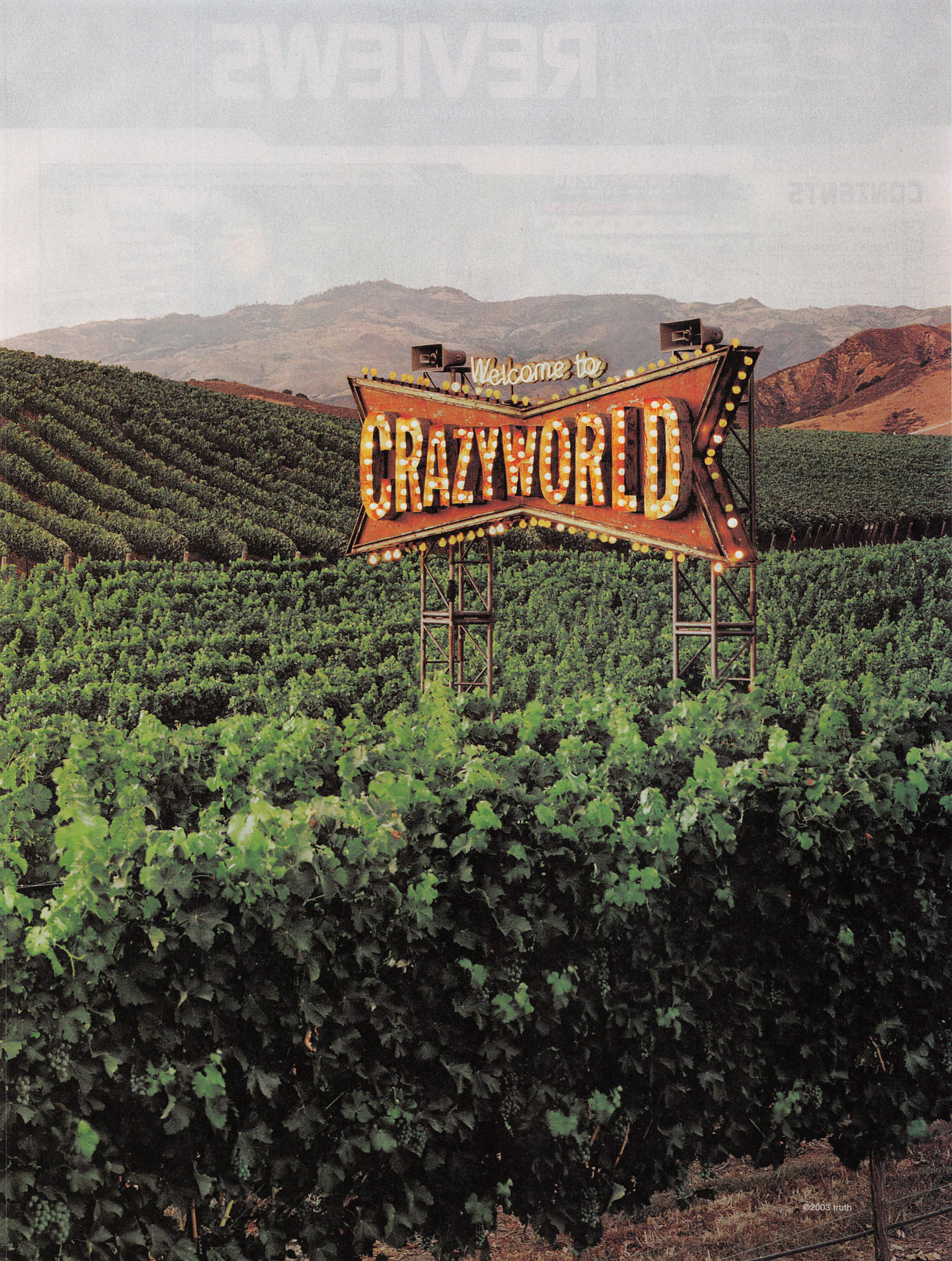
In 1989 millions of cases of imported fruit were banned after a small amount of cyanide was found in just two grapes. There's thirty-three times more cyanide in a single cigarette than was found in those two grapes. Just another amazing-but-true fun fact here in Crazyworld.

THETRUTH.COM

TICKET VALID 365 DAYS A YEAR

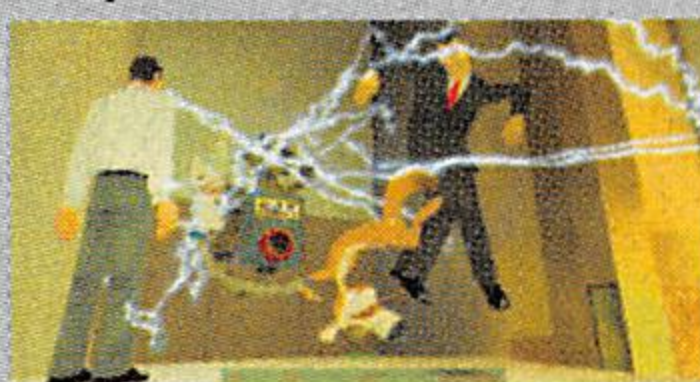


ADMIT ONE



CONTENTS

- 32 **Battlestar Galactica**
- 48 **Cabela's Dangerous Hunts**
- 48 **Fairly Oddparents**
- 46 **Fugitive Hunter: WOT**
- 36 **.hack//QUARANTINE**
- 43 **Hardware Reviews**
- 37 **Harry Potter ATSS**
- 46 **The Hobbit**
- 48 **Looney Tunes: BIA**
- 28 **Manhunt**
- 48 **Mobile Suit Gundam: EIS**
- 29 **R: Racing Evolution**
- 29 **The Sims Bustin' Out**
- 46 **Spawn: Armageddon**
- 29 **SpongeBob SquarePants**
- 32 **Spy Hunter 2**
- 48 **Tokyo Extreme Racer 3**
- 24 **Tony Hawk's Underground**
- 40 **True Crime: Streets of L.A.**
- 48 **Virtual On: MARZ**
- 37 **Whiplash**



◀ We keep thinking this series is about to dry up, and we're wrong every single time.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Another year, another incredible Tony Hawk game



SCORING

- 10 **CLASSIC**
A rare gem; Our highest recommendation
- 9 **OUTSTANDING**
One of the better games this year
- 8 **VERY GOOD**
You can't go wrong
- 7 **GOOD**
A solid game
- 6 **OKAY**
Kind of fun, but no big deal
- 5 **SO-SO**
You've got to love the subject matter
- 4 **LACKING**
Big flaws really hurt this game
- 3 **BAD**
Not fun at all
- 2 **AWFUL**
This game is an insult
- 1 **WHY?**
Why would anyone do this to us?

We take our reviews very seriously. We spend hours upon hours playtesting each title so that we can give you the absolute best information to help you buy.

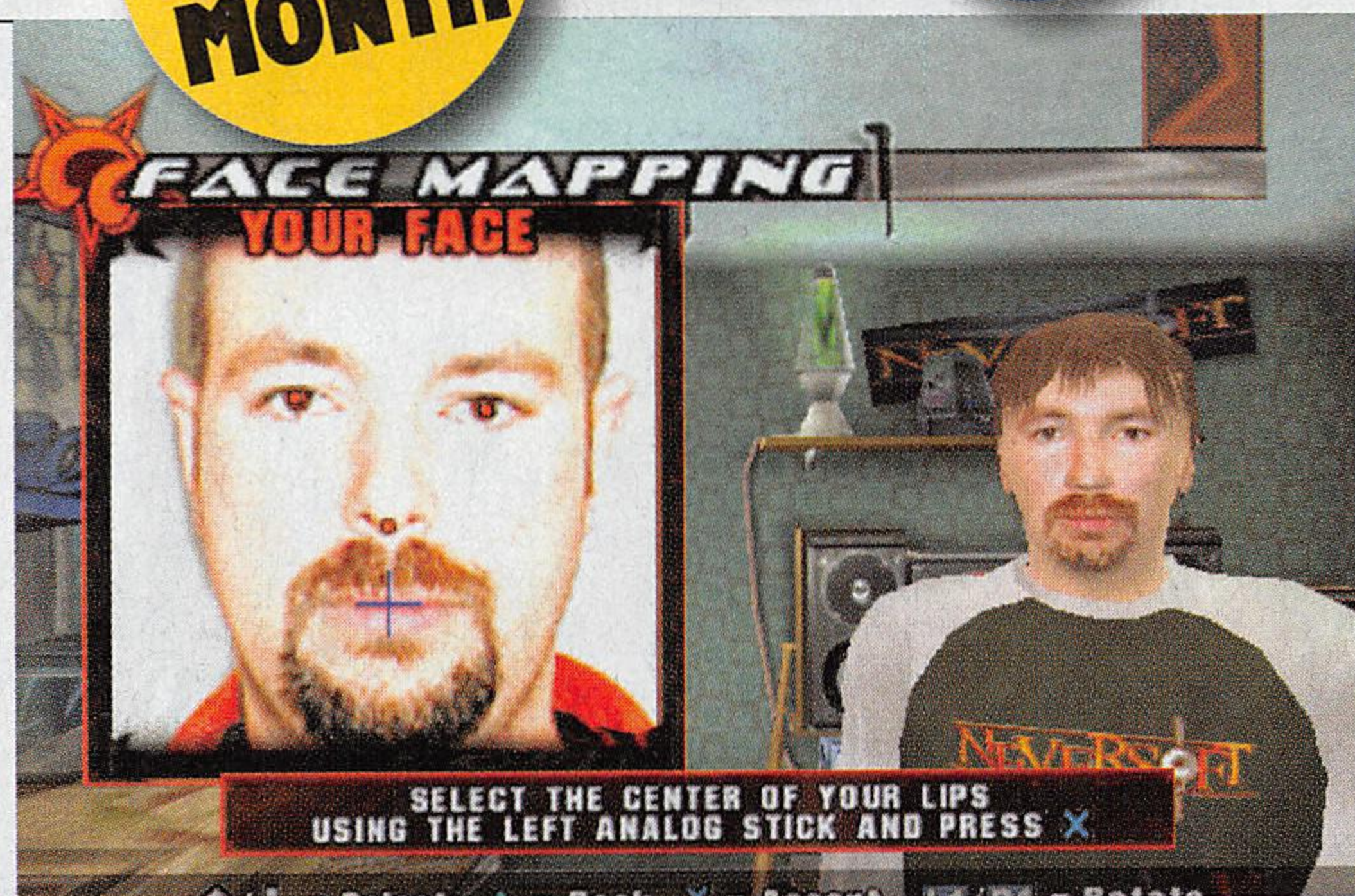
Games that score an 8, 9 or 10 earn a Bronze, Silver or Gold **PSM Must-Buy Award**. We don't hand these beauties out easily, so if you see one on a review, a game box or advertising, you'll want to be sure to check that game out.

Finally, when looking up past scores, keep in mind that older games usually wouldn't fare as well if they were reviewed today.

We honestly weren't sure we really needed yet another *Tony Hawk* game. After all, how could series creator Neversoft add enough new features to keep the gameplay in this, the fifth game in the *Tony Hawk* series, from getting stale? Sure, *Tony Hawk's Underground* is built upon an amazing 3D engine. And yes, the awesome trademark gameplay is fully intact, and the new levels are expertly designed, with layer upon layer of depth, but is this enough to energize a splintering fan base? Given Neversoft's track record, we should've known better than to doubt. *Tony Hawk's Underground* has hooked us all over again.

Neversoft stumbles a bit, but mostly succeeds with *THUG*. The story (the series' first legitimate plotline) is simplistic, but still works well, and the "create your own park/character/moves" tools are more robust than ever. PS2 owners are especially lucky; only the PS2 version supports the game's two biggest assets — the option to create an in-game character with your very own face, and the ability to play online.

Giving your character your face is simple. Players snap a digital shot of their face, email it to faces@thugonline.com, and within about 30 minutes, a prepared texture map is ready. You just take your PS2 online, download the image to your Memory Card, enter Create-a-Skater mode, and place your face on a head. After this, you can add hundreds of body types, clothes, hats, skin colors and other items to

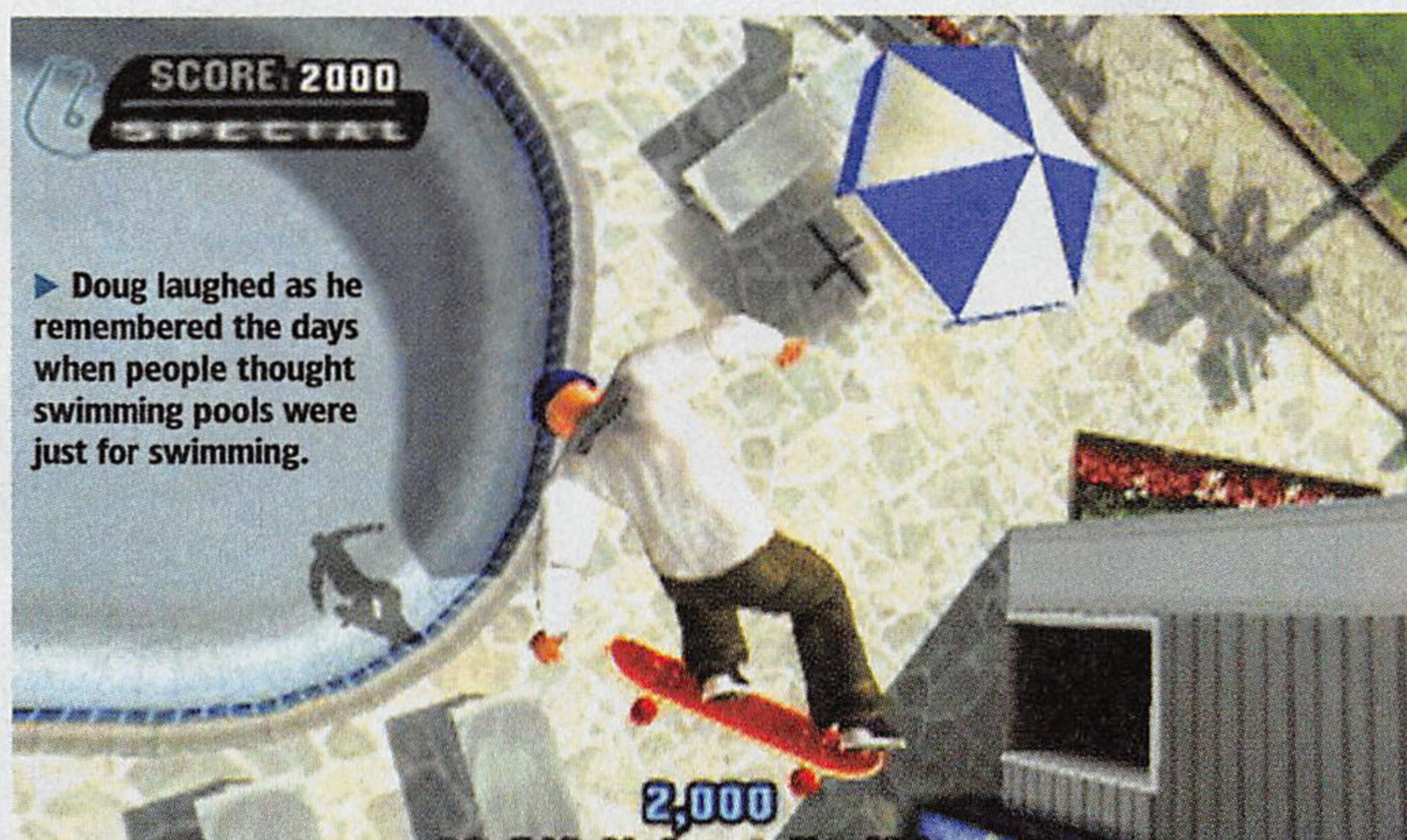


▲ If you really want to represent, you can go online and insert a photo of yourself, which you can then put on your created character.

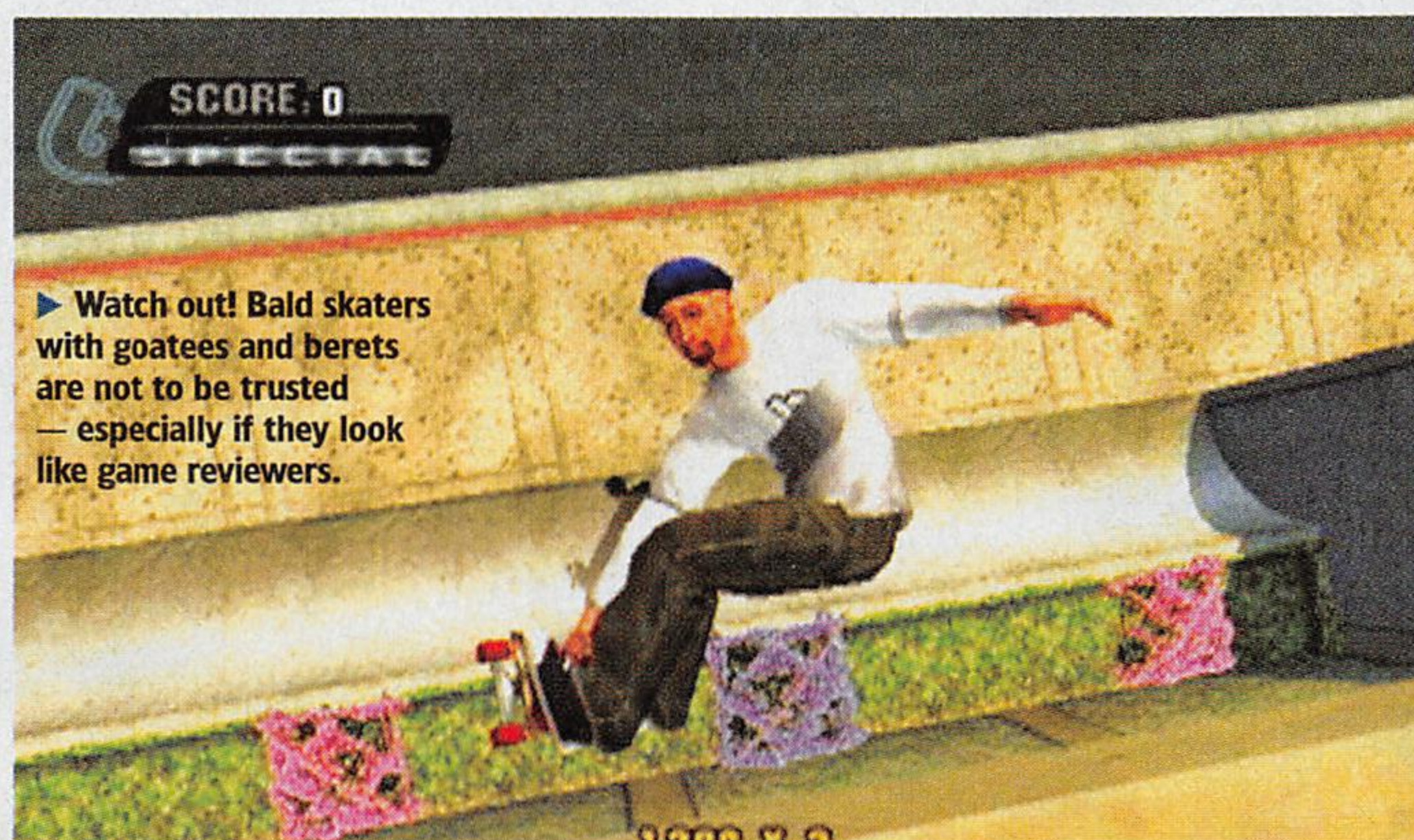
this head to make a thug who looks just like you — only with bones of steel and vastly madder "skillz".

The other modes are stellar, especially if you like to tinker. Players can create their own tricks, decks, skate parks and goals. Want to out-do Tony Hawk's stunning 900 move? Just tinker with this editor and add a few flips to add insult to injury. The Park Editor from last year is fully expanded. You can set your own goals, decide the time of day or night, and use the super easy-to-use rail tool to create intensely "creative" levels.

<< TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND HAS HOOKED US ALL OVER AGAIN >>



► Doug laughed as he remembered the days when people thought swimming pools were just for swimming.



► Watch out! Bald skaters with goatees and berets are not to be trusted — especially if they look like game reviewers.

Perhaps the most interesting of the new gameplay elements is the ability to get off your board. By pressing **LB** and **RB** simultaneously, your skater de-boards. Although the off-board controls are clumsy and require time to get acclimate oneself to, skaters can now scale previously unreachable houses, buildings and telephone wires to expand their combo repertoire. You can also commandeer the occasional dune buggy or police car, but we'll leave that for you to discover.



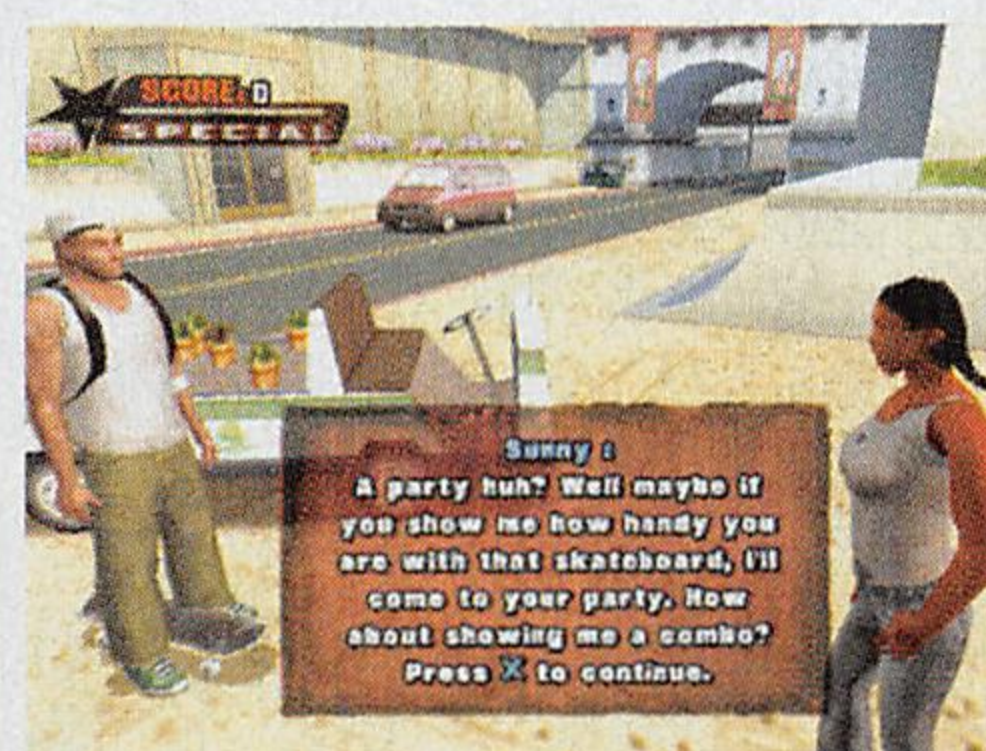
▲ You can edit not only your character's appearance, but also individual tricks — though this one here may count as self-inflicted abuse.

HOW IT STACKS UP

SSX 3	10
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	9
Tony Hawk's Underground	9
Wakeboarding Unleashed	8
BMX XXX	6



▲ The ability to go on foot means you can also climb up ladders, onto rooftops, and into other interesting, out-of-the-way, combo-friendly locations.



▲ Just as in the last game, NPCs give you most of your level goals.

Bored Of Boards?

One of the most notable changes in *Tony Hawk's Underground* is the ability to move around the environments using something besides a skateboard for locomotion... for instance, your feet. Or maybe a dune buggy — strange how well those things grind a rail, isn't it?



▲ Until someone made a skateboard with a seatbelt and rollcage, Mary Jane would play it safe.

PSM 9
FINAL SCORE

OUTSTANDING

Just when we think we've loosed ourselves from this series' grip, it pulls us back in. It's bigger, deeper, and more engrossing than ever.

The online game may be the game's greatest feature. There are more than 10 online gameplay modes, including Trick Attack, Score Challenge, Combo Mambo, Slap!, King of the Hill, Graffiti, Freeslate,

Firefight, the two-player-only Horse, and online-only modes Goal Attack and Capture the Flag.

Overall, there's just enough new stuff here to draw recovered addicts back to the fold and make it more

newbie-friendly than ever, though it's no guarantee that even these new bits will coax fence-sitters to make the plunge. Rent it or buy it; either way, the game is still as addictive and entertaining as ever. **DOUG PERRY**



► You can create a player character who has your face.

► You'll spend most of your time on your board, but if you leave it, you can climb ladders and gain access to new areas... or just jump off the roof, Jackass-style.

▲ Note the strip joint behind you. This is a seedier environment than previous games. Remember, you're underground now. Not that boarding is illegal or anything.

PSM BREAKDOWN An up-close look at the game in action



Comic Mischief
Mild Language
Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

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JAK II™



THIS WORLD IS
BETTER LEFT TO JAK.

It ain't no namby pamby fairyland, pal. It's a whole new kind of evil. Crawling with ruthless dictators, backstabbing allies and blood thirsty freaks with an appetite for extra rare meat. All pansies kindly tippy toe on out of here. This requires someone with serious ass-kicking savvy. And that someone, my friend, is Jak. This time he's pissed off and battle ready, with a frighteningly large gun, get-the-hell-outta-my-way hoverboard and a nasty case of mutant powers. So please, save yourself the detached appendages and let him handle it.

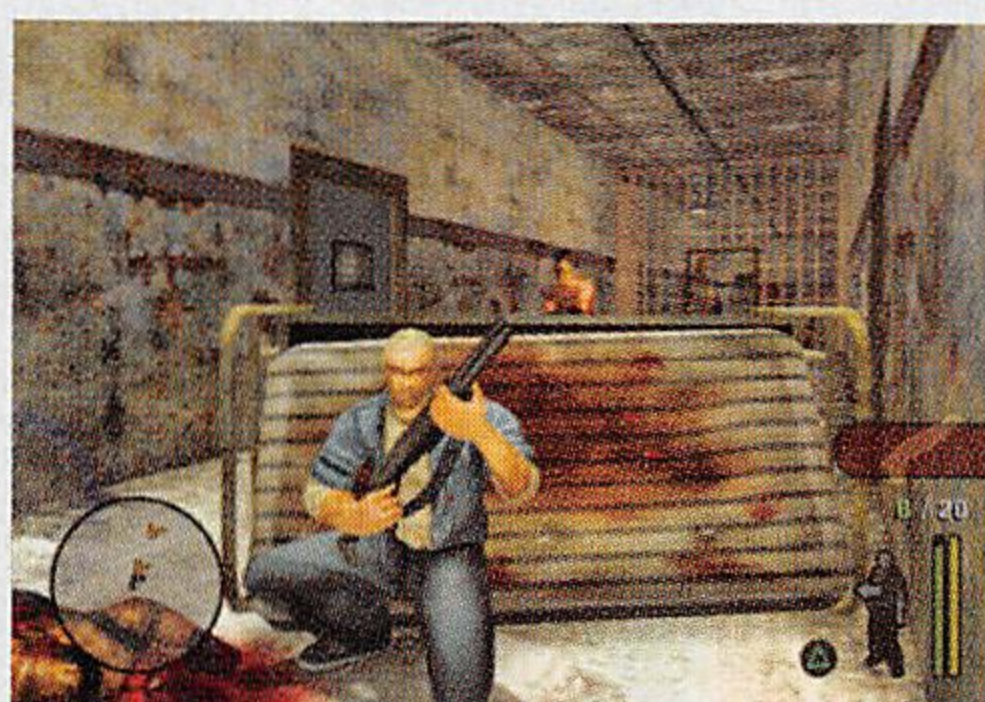


NAUGHTY DOG®

PlayStation®2



LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS™



▲ On levels where you can find firearms, hiding in shadows is less important than finding cover.



▲ The Director watches your every move on his hidden cameras, and talks to you via the USB headset.

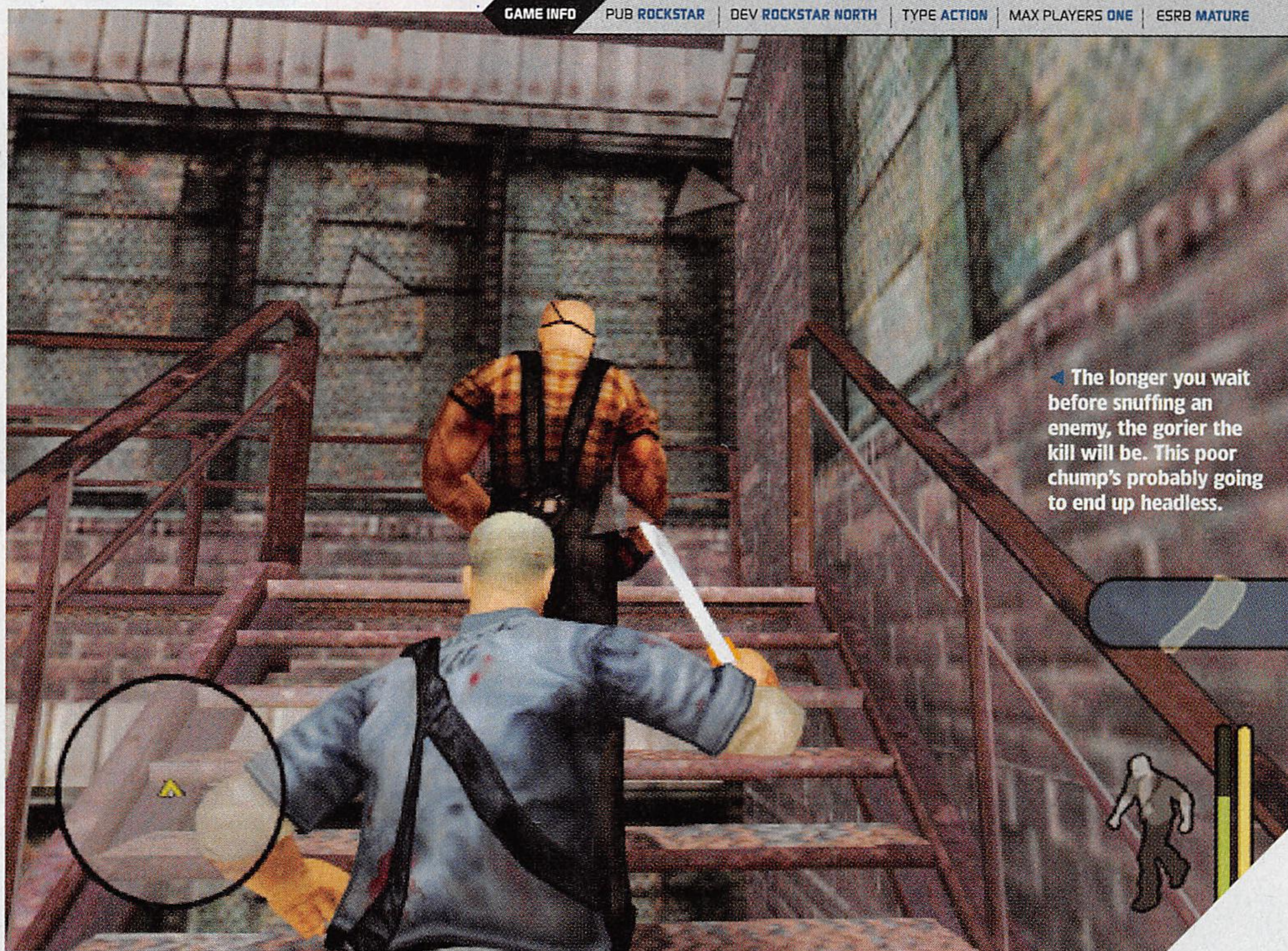
f holier-than-thou mainstream media outlets thought last year's *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* was violent, they're going to faint when they see *Manhunt*.

The game casts the player as convicted death-row inmate James Earl Cash, who must sneak through huge, decaying cityscapes and use whatever weapons he can find — everything from plastic bags or baseball bats to a machete or shotgun — to slaughter gangs of homicidal maniacs before they kill him first. As you might guess, seriously gory gameplay results. This one's rated Mature for a reason.

It plays pretty damn well, too. All shock value aside, *Manhunt* is a third-person, stealth action title, very similar to *Metal Gear Solid*. Cash is a badass, but he's easily overpowered when outnumbered. Survival usually means staying in the shadows — there's a meter showing when you're hidden — and luring your enemies into coming to you, one at a time. You can do this by making noise: tapping the wall, tossing a brick, bottle, or dismembered head, or even by speaking into the PS2's USB headset, which "The Director", who runs the show,



▲ Our favorite gang is The Innocents, who wear skull masks and take lots of peyote, which makes them say interesting things.



▲ The longer you wait before snuffing an enemy, the gorier the kill will be. This poor chump's probably going to end up headless.



MANHUNT

Grand Theft Auto's creators sneak into the stealth action genre — let the blood flow!

also uses to speak directly to you — nice touch. If the enemy hears you, he'll investigate, giving you the perfect opportunity to execute one of dozens of brutal stealth kills.

Speaking of enemies, each gang looks, speaks, and hunts a bit differently, but they're all very tough to beat in a stand-up fight. When seen, plan to make like a track star and run until you can hide again, rather than try to duke it out. The exception to this is when you've found a firearm. If you're packing heat, the game switches gears, enabling you to forget stealth and start running and gunning

like a madman. You can even duck and fire over cover.

Manhunt also has a few problems. The controls (especially the camera controls) are tough to get used to, and the too-simple hand-to-hand fighting engine needs polish. It also lacks *GTA's* deep plot and mission variety, instead relying a bit too much upon atmosphere and gore to carry the gameplay. Levels where you're escorting or hunting down another person offer slight variation, but not enough. More variety, be it *Ico*-style environmental puzzles, *GTA*-type missions, *MGS*-inspired boss battles, greater AI diversity, or simply deeper interactivity with the environment, would have really helped keep things fresh. Ultimately, *Manhunt* is still a game worth playing for the unique atmosphere it creates. Just remember

that this isn't for the young, the sensitive, or the squeamish. ERIC BRATCHER



▲ Late in the game, you'll take on the Director's personal guards, who come loaded for bear.

HOW IT STACKS UP

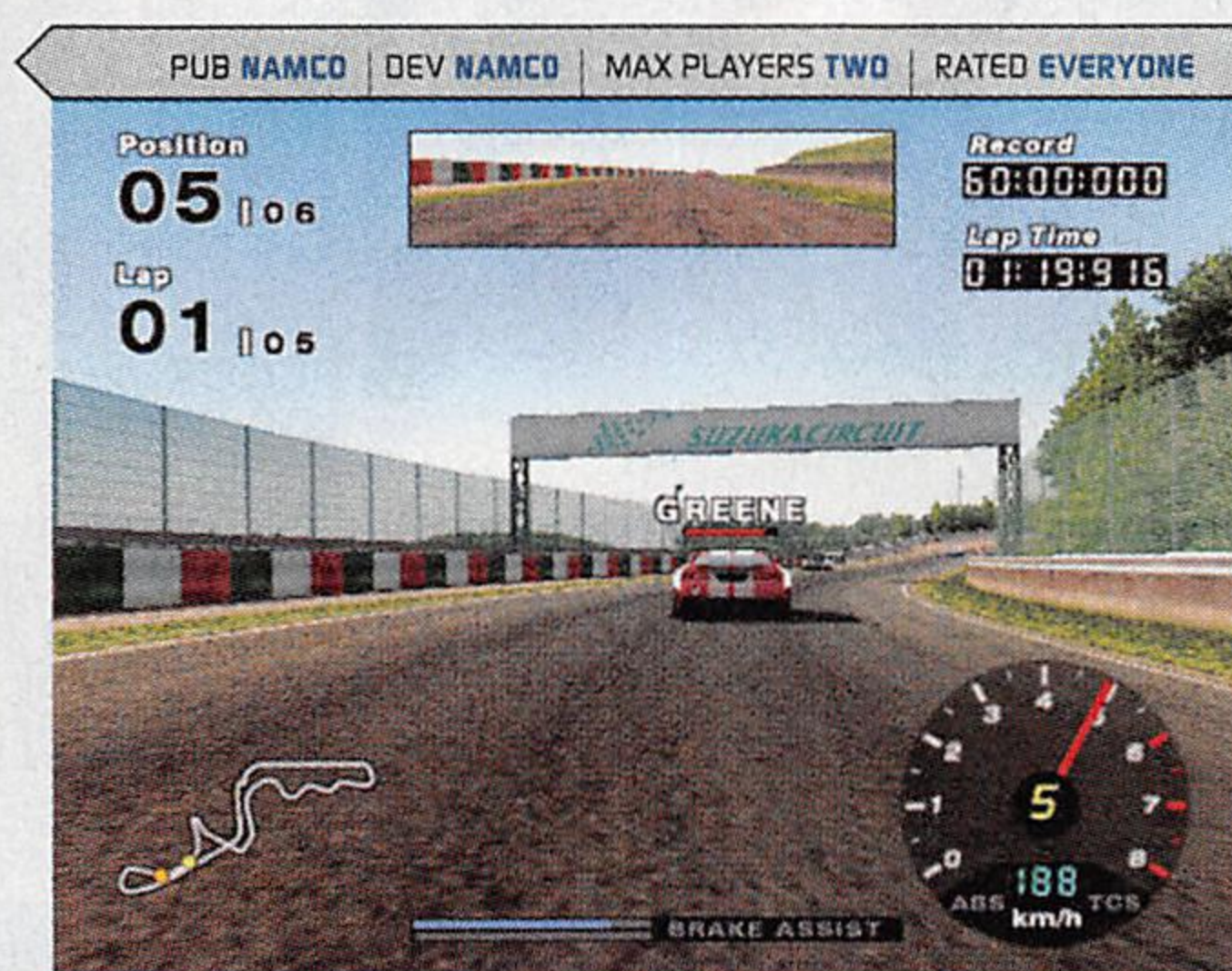
MGS2: Substance	9
Splinter Cell	9
Manhunt	8
Gladiator	8
Rogue Ops	6

PSM
FINAL SCORE

8

VERY GOOD

Rockstar's take on the stealth action genre isn't quite *Metal Gear Solid* meets *GTA*, but it does have plenty to offer those who can handle it.



▲ Why *Racing Evolution* doesn't look better than *Ridge Racer V* overall eludes us — but it doesn't.

R: RACING EVOLUTION

Kudos to Namco for trying something different. It's been more than three years since the company's last racing title, but instead of another *Ridge Racer* installment, it decided to take the road less traveled: a racing simulation with arcade undertones.

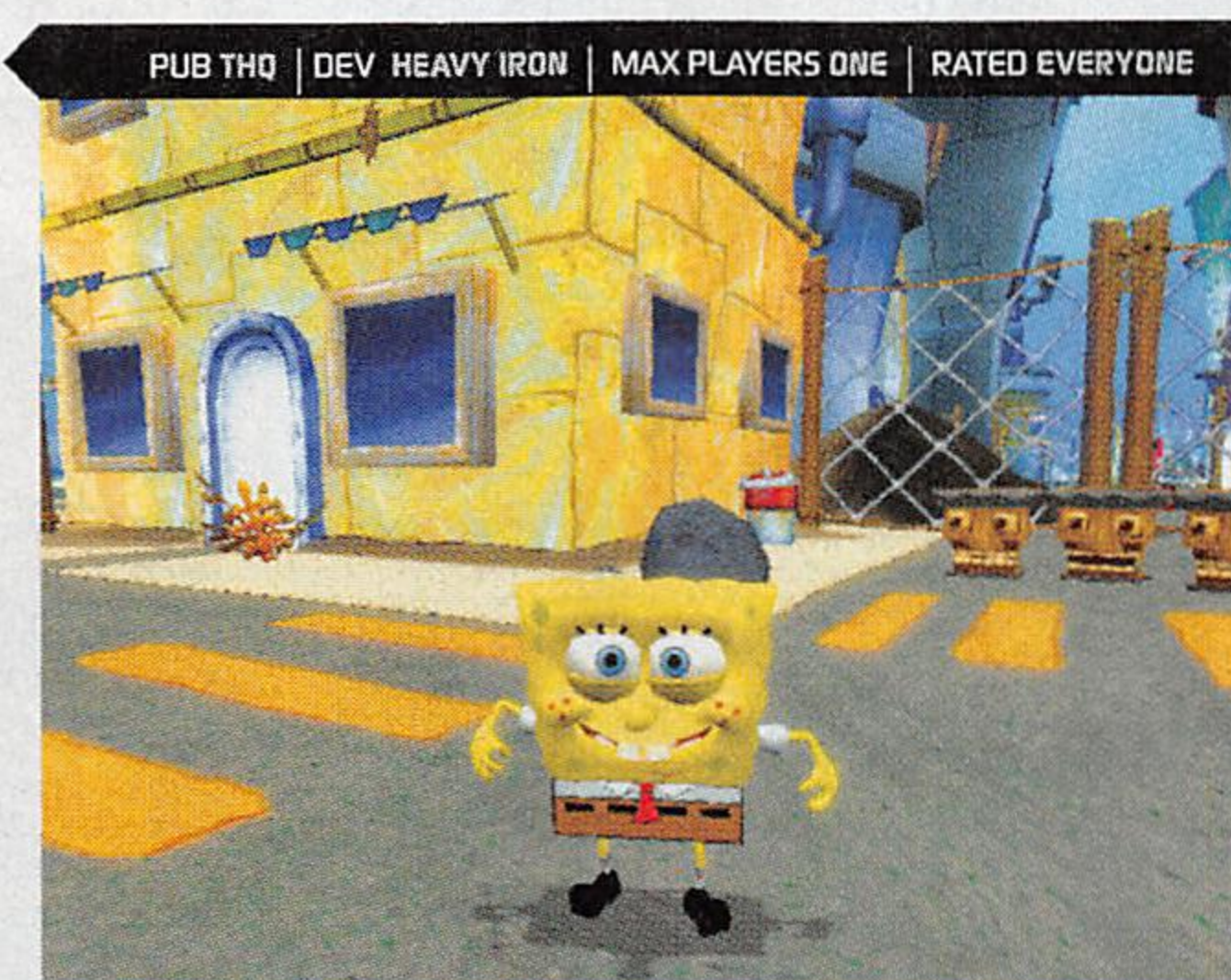
The results are mixed. *R: Racing Evolution* is a solid racing game, but its real-world courses (and even its original venues) fail to deliver the same amount of sheer thrill that its completely arcade-skewed predecessors did. Control feels nice and responsive for the most part; just don't expect any major power-sliding outside of the rally courses.

Innovation is almost unheard of in racing games these days, so it's nice to see Namco try something new with *Racing Evolution's* "pressure meter". As its name suggests, it enables you to really put the pressure on other drivers — even to the point that they lose control — by tailgating and driving too closely to them. Combined with the nearly constant radio chatter from your pit crew and rivals, this feature really makes the races more "personal" — as does the story mode, complete with cut-scenes and a sexy female lead.

Speaking of sexy, Namco's known for churning out stunning visuals on PS2 — one look at *Soul Calibur II* will attest to that fact. If *Tekken 4* is Namco's Cameron Diaz, *Racing Evolution* is more like the girl next door: cute, but not likely to stand out in a crowd. It looks good overall, and the cars in particular look great, but we have to wonder why it doesn't look much better — and in some cases worse — than *Ridge Racer V*, which was a PS2 launch title.

Image issues aside, there's still a lot to like about the game. There are numerous driving challenges to supplement the one-shot story mode, and the game definitely doesn't skimp on challenge. But is that enough to make it a permanent addition to your racing library? Probably not, especially when *Burnout 2* does arcade racing so well, and *Gran Turismo* is, well, the racing simulator. Diehard racing fans should definitely check it out, but everyone else will want to take the genre's real must-haves for a spin first. **RANDY NELSON**

PSM **7** **GOOD** The control's solid, but the courses and visuals lack that *RR* spark.



▲ Kiddy game or not, *Battle for Bikini Bottom* is a simple, easy to enjoy diversion.

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

There are two kinds of people in this world: those who "get" *SpongeBob SquarePants* and those who don't.

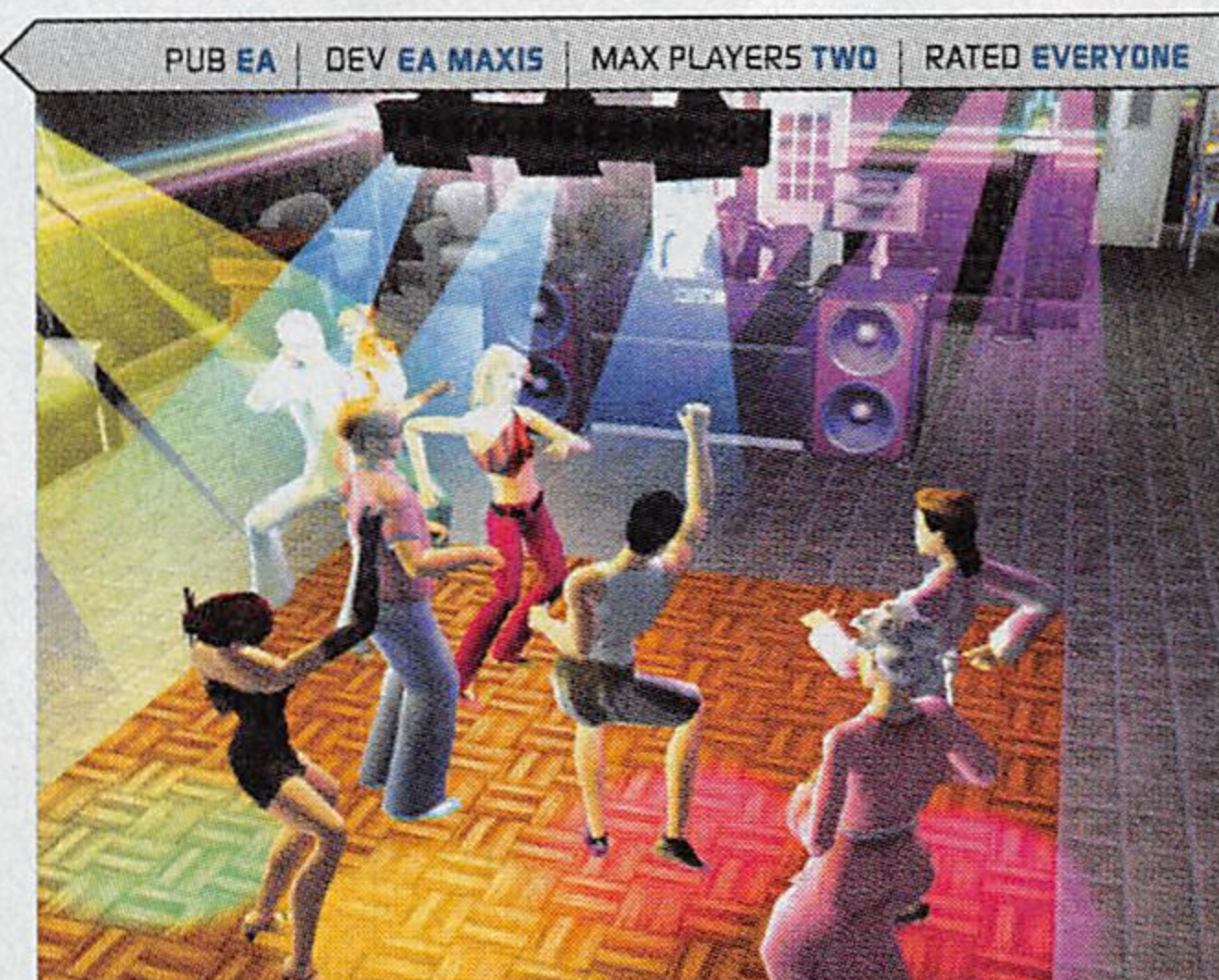
The "gets" tend to be nearly psychotic in their devotion, and the "don't gets" usually watch dumbfounded as the rest of the world goes nuts over a talking sponge with a preschool mentality, ambiguous (if any) sexual orientation, and friends including a chubby, dumb-as-a-rock starfish and a rodent in a deep-sea diving suit. But regardless of where you fall on that meter, *SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom* is good enough to appeal to both factions.

The setup is simple: the pint-sized villain Plankton has cloned an army of robots — yeah, we don't know how to clone a robot either, but he seems to have it figured out — in an attempt to obtain the secret crabby patty recipe by force. Unfortunately, his robots ignore him and instead take over all of Bikini Bottom, leaving it to our trio of heroes to sort it all out.

Each of the three playable characters has the standard assortment of jumping moves and a basic attack, as well as some unique abilities. SpongeBob has an rising slam and sometimes turns into a *Super Monkey Ball*-style sponge ball, Patrick (who attacks enemies with his pudgy belly) can lift and throw tiki crates, stunned enemies, or fruit, Sandy Bottom has a lasso that enables her to swing, glide, or attack distant enemies, and so on. Plus, the levels are packed with other activities, like bungee jumping, bubble bowling, and slopes that can be slid down, snowboard style — except SpongeBob rides on his tongue.

SpongeBob isn't terribly challenging, its graphics are average, and the catchy, island-themed music is redundant. However, it's huge and solidly designed, it controls well, and the levels, while admittedly linear, are filled with hidden items, secrets, and some fun activities. There are no cheap deaths, a hint we wish all games would take, and if you're a *SpongeBob* fan, you'll find that the series' irreverent personality is fully intact here. Overall, this is a big, solid game with a golden license, and it's just fun, plain and simple. **ERIC BRATCHER**

PSM **7** **GOOD** This is more enjoyable than many "serious" platform action games.



▲ Several new locations, like this club, allow you to take your Sim on the road and meet new characters.

THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT

PSM **MUST-BUY** **BRONZE**

While already long established in the PC market as the most successful series of all time, *The Sims* has only recently started to get its feet wet in the console world. However, with the second PS2 title, *The Sims Bustin' Out*, it appears the franchise is already quickly picking up speed.

The developers went all out and built upon or enhanced practically everything that we saw in the first game. A deeper career system now allows you to go back and forth between jobs more freely, expanding the abilities of your Sim and increasing the number of things that can be unlocked. In fact, there are well over 100 new objects and social moves for fans to discover. Moon walk, anyone?

The biggest addition would have to be the exclusive PS2-only online Weekend mode, which allows players to interact with other people and trade any items they've unlocked. And, since it's the weekend, you don't have to worry about those pesky jobs. You can just focus on building up your skills.

It might have been beneficial to include more of a tutorial for Sim newbies, though, as the game does tend to move at a brisk pace and throw a lot of objectives your way quickly. I also just wished that there weren't so many awarded bonuses for every time you accomplish something, especially during the early periods. For the most part, I'm all about rewarding the gamer, but sometimes too much is just, well, too much. It can get a bit overwhelming, as too many available options sometimes make it difficult to simply decide what to do next.

Those minor, and I mean minor, quips aside, *Bustin' Out* is definitely a great step forward for *The Sims* and presents plenty of fun and challenge. There's so much to interact with and a good many places to explore. The challenge of advancing along your career and the bonus of being able to play cooperatively online should keep most Sim-heads busy for a long, long time. Newcomers, however, might want to pick up a copy of the first game first, as it's got a smoother ramp-up curve and does a better job of introducing the basics. **STEPHEN FROST**

PSM **8** **VERY GOOD** We would have loved some additional competitive online options.



IN MY QUEST
FOR REDEMPTION

NOT EVEN MY
DEATH

I COMMAND THE FORCES OF TIME.

DECEIVED BY A TREACHEROUS VIZIER, I WAS LED TO UNLEASH THE DARK POWERS OF THE SANDS OF TIME UPON THE SULTAN'S KINGDOM. NOW, AS DARKNESS CONSUMES ALL IN ITS PATH, MY SPEED, AGILITY, AND SKILL AS A WARRIOR ARE NOT ENOUGH. I MUST LEARN TO COMMAND THE SANDS TO SLOW, FREEZE, ACCELERATE, AND EVEN REVERSE TIME ITSELF. IF I FAIL TO UNDO MY FATAL MISTAKE, ALL SHALL PERISH WITH ME. MINE IS A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL. . . NOT GLORY.



Blood
Violence
Suggestive Themes



PlayStation 2

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▲ The coolest car ever faces off against its greatest adversary: one really huge train.



▲ Just like your car, your partner has very big... guns.



▲ If your Interceptor takes too much damage, you will lose the outer shell and transform into a high speed escape bike.

► Sometimes just having a sidekick is the best part of being a hero...

GAME INFO PUB MIDWAY | DEV ANGEL STUDIOS | TYPE DRIVING | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB RATING TEEN

SPYHUNTER 2

Peter's Gunning again



◀ The engine's lighting effects are worth showing off — everything definitely blows up nicely.

After a promising rebirth in 2001, the *Spy Hunter* series has returned, again providing the player with an excuse to blast an unending number of mobile targets to bits on asphalt battlefields ranging from Russia to New Orleans and Asia to Switzerland. Unfortunately, due to a ragged feel, *SH2* fails to offer much more.

As usual, the game's real star is the cooler-than-ever Interceptor, the sexiest car/boat/motorcycle/

snowmobile on Earth. The driving physics are vastly improved, but there's a down side: the missions are each divided into smaller sections, but if you get through two sections of a mission and die in the third segment, you still have to restart at the beginning — lame.

Moreover, the AI and damage systems are also suspect. The friendly AI drives on rails, so if you happen to get in front of a vehicle you're escorting, it will plow right into you and knock your car out of the way.

Damage from enemies appears to be inconsistent; locking fenders with an opponent sometimes did no damage, and sometimes took us from a full health bar to critical in an instant.

Even multiplayer modes are hit and miss: a co-op mode, where one

player controls the car and the other controls the turret gun is short lived, but *Spy Hunt* mode, essentially two person arena deathmatch, isn't bad. Too bad it's not online. Ultimately, this is a fun game — it just fails to reach the next level. ADAM PAVLACKA

PSM 6
FINAL SCORE

OKAY
An average game that lacks polish, but provides the simple satisfaction of blowing things up.

▼ Adama races to the rescue of his beloved mommyship.



Timed to correspond with the Sci-Fi channel's prequel to a cult-favorite, late '70s TV series, *Battlestar Galactica* is clearly an undercooked rush job. There's almost no depth to the gameplay: hordes of Cylon Raiders (read: bad guys) are attacking your mothership, and it's up to you, as Commander Adama, to protect the space fleet.

This takes the form of lots of interstellar dogfighting in various spacecraft and occasionally manning the laser turrets of the *Galactica*. The graphics are admirable, all the ships

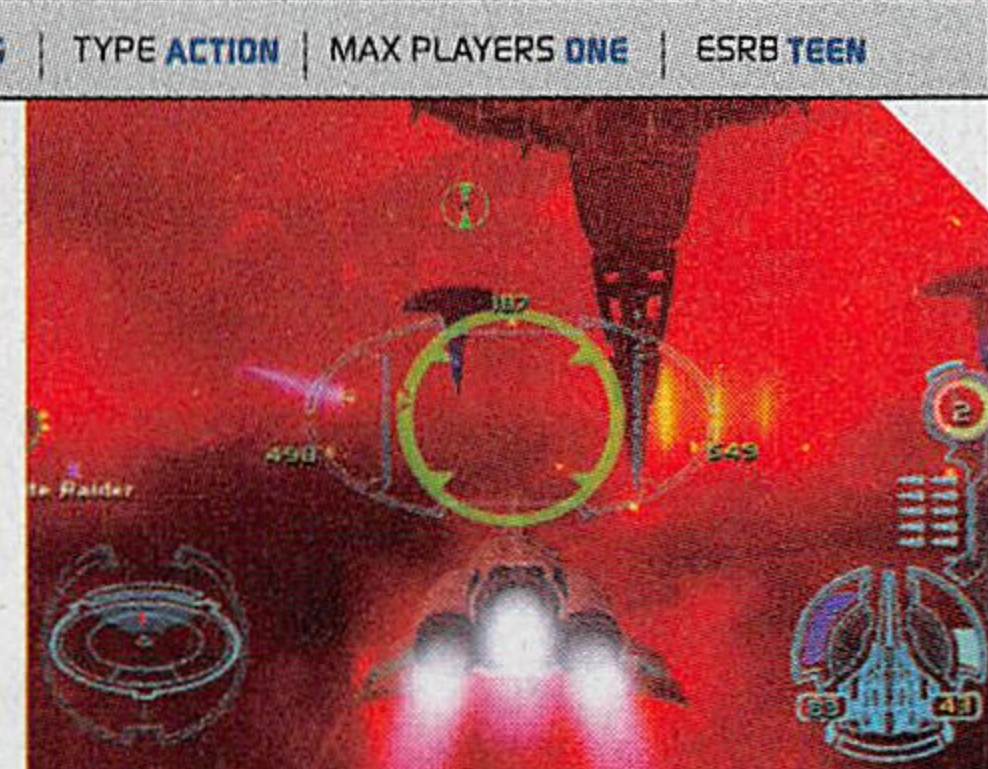


▲ The Cylon ships handle pretty well — just don't break formation or you're doomed.

control very nicely, and the chatter between the pilots and the Cylons give the game an impressive sense



▲ The *Galactica*'s gun turret offers a great view of the special effects.



▲ Apollo prepares to blow the hell out of Cloud City. Hey! Wait a minute...

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Let the annihilation of Man begin!

of immersion. The sound effects and visuals will make fans of the series feel instantly at home.

Unfortunately, *Battlestar Galactica* is just dull. You can use two different types of laser fire and customize your missiles' speed, maneuverability, blast radius and

firepower, but endlessly blasting waves of Raiders with the same weaponry gets boring very quickly. Moreover, mission difficulty is very erratic — some are easily whipped on the first try, but others, particularly escort missions, will have players tearing their hair out. The coolest level has players infiltrating a Cylon outpost in a stolen ship, but even the tiniest slip results in instant death and the entire Cylon fleet descending upon you. Dust off *Jedi Starfighter* and leave this one on the shelf.

DOUG TRUEMAN

PSM 5
FINAL SCORE

SO-SO
Hardcore fans of the series will enjoy it, but those looking for an engaging space battle — or a decent game — won't.



UNLEASH YOUR VENGEANCE

"A first-rate game."

–GamePro - 4.5/5

EDITORS' CHOICE

**"The pulse has quickened,
and ruthless action reigns."**

–Electronic Gaming Monthly

MATURE 17+



Blood and Gore
Intense Violence



PlayStation®2



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exciting action titles."**

—Game Informer

**"The long-standing Legacy of Kain
series finally hits paydirt with one
of the best stories in the series and
without a doubt, one of the best combat
systems in an action-adventure series."**

—IGN

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—PSM

**PSM
MUST-BUY
BRONZE**

SLAUGHTER MERCILESSLY.



Utilize powerful telekinetic abilities to hurl enemies into objects, impale them on sharp objects, or throw them off ledges.



Engage in thrilling combo moves using physical agility, telekinesis, and the formidable Reaver blade to destroy hordes of human, and undead foes.



As Kain or Raziel, feed your dark hunger by sucking the blood and devouring the souls of enemies to survive.

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▲ As always, those who simply can't get enough can always generate random passwords and explore new dungeons.



▲ Technically, you could start the series cold and just play this final chapter, but it would be a serious gameplay challenge.

To be honest, as the fourth and final installment in the .hack series, this latest episode doesn't contain much that hasn't

been done to death in the previous ones. You'll still be fighting your way through dungeons with a small group of selectable party members. You'll still be frantically scrolling through your spell and ability list for the right elemental attack against sometimes brutally tough monsters. And you'll still be chasing down the reason why your friend, Orca, fell into a coma while playing a fictional online game called "The World." There's nothing wrong with any of this, of course — just be aware that you won't be blown away by any wildly innovative new features in .hack 4.

This warning aside, those who've constantly returned to the dungeon crawling crack pipe that is the .hack series will be delighted by the twists and turns in the storyline of the final chapter. This is especially true for those who've chosen to immerse themselves in all aspects of .hack: the parallel anime series, the half-sense of the game's cyber-tech



▲ The graphics engine has never been stellar, but the concept and storytelling remain compelling.



▲ It's been a long time coming, but the finale of the .hack saga is finally here.

.hack//QUARANTINE

The end of "The World" is finally here!

conspiracies and character fandom. Without going into spoiler territory, if you're one of these types of series fans, you'll definitely get the most out of the game. In addition, .hack 4 packs in the longest adventure of the four games. With a bigger, tougher stash of boss fights (can you say Cubia squared?), side quests, and characters to maintain, the ride isn't over as quickly as in, say, //MUTATION.

But does all this make it worth it in the end? Well, if you've been returning for each game (with carryover flagged saves in hand), then of course. But for those looking to get

their feet wet for the first time, expect a serious acclimation period and a tough difficulty level to surmount. It's not impossible, but you probably won't get the deeper amount of enjoyment out of the game without understanding the entire background story going into the finale.

As an end to the series, //QUARANTINE serves as a nice conclusion, with just enough rewards for those who've fought their way through the entire series. Though we wish gameplay would've evolved and progressed more over the course of the series, or shown a bit more innovation with each new installment, it definitely serves as a worthwhile, year-long experiment for Bandai and a four part boon for deep-pocketed RPG fans. FRANCESCA REYES



▲ Scale is a very relative thing in "The World", and the baddies are often far more massive than you.

HOW IT STACKS UP

.hack//INFECTION	8
.hack//MUTATION	8
.hack//QUARANTINE	7
.hack//OUTBREAK	7
Arc The Lad TOTS	7

PSM
FINAL SCORE

7 GOOD

Sure, it's the same old cut 'n' paste gameplay formula, but if you've played into .hack's dual layered world thus far, it's a solid and enjoyable note upon which to end the series.



▲ Spiky pink hair and a turquoise and yellow jumpsuit — when this is all over, Nuke is getting a forced makeover.

GAME INFO

PUB EIDOS

DEV CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

TYPE ACTION

MAX PLAYERS ONE

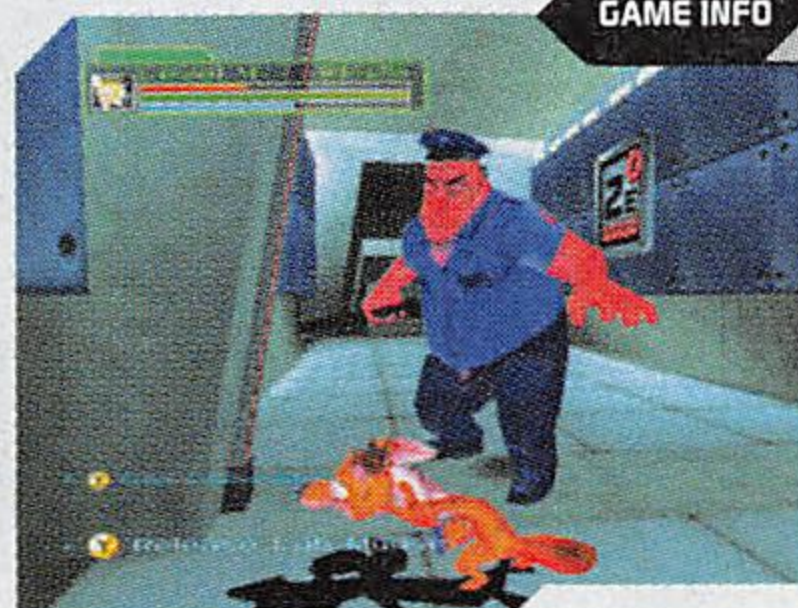
ESRB RATING TEEN



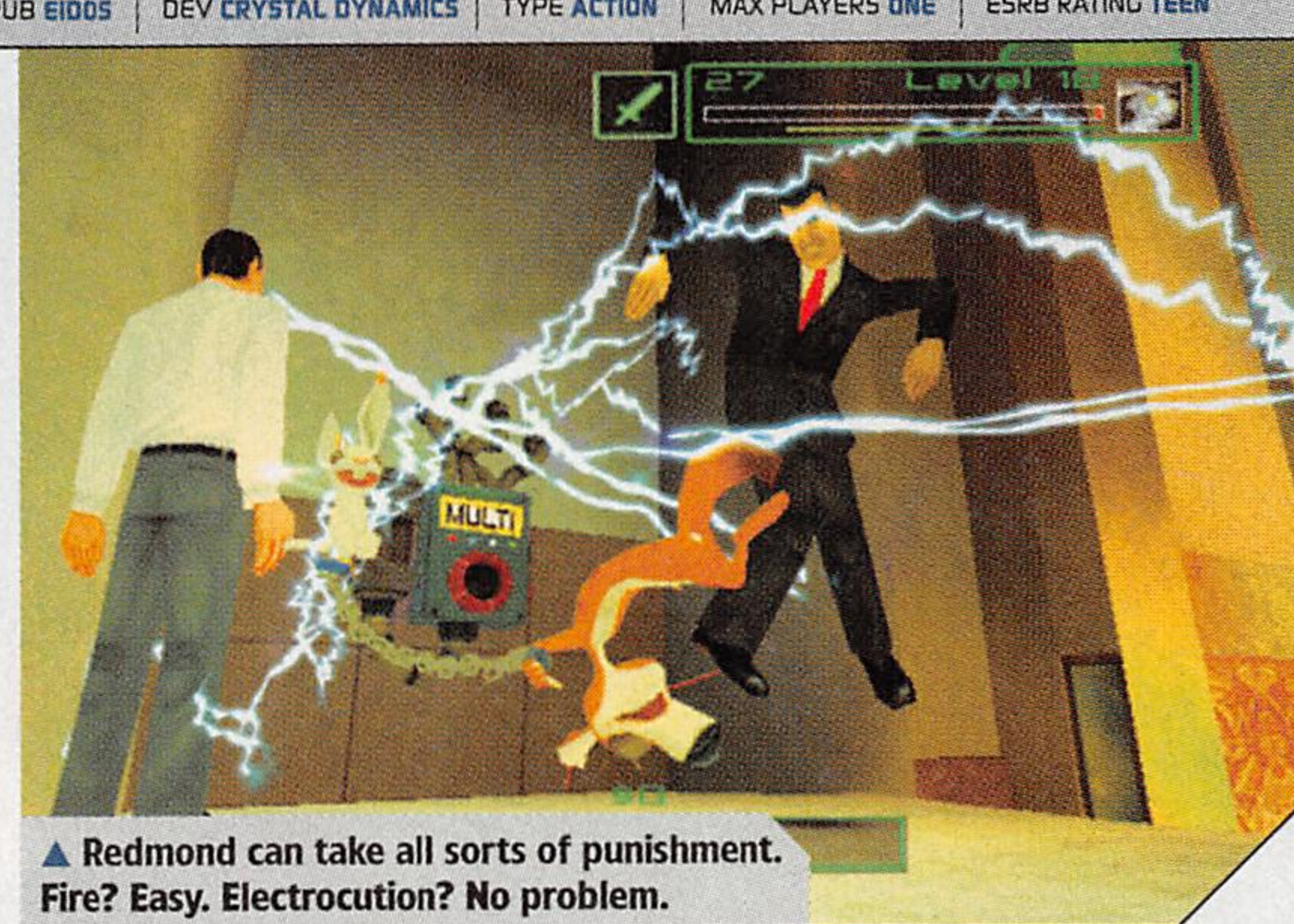
▲ It's possible to use machines to "power-up" Redmond into cool new forms.



▲ At the end of his rope: Spanx throws a bunny wrench into the machinery.



▲ Despite the poor gameplay, we can't knock Whiplash's animations. Here Spanx runs for his life.



▲ Redmond can take all sorts of punishment. Fire? Easy. Electrocution? No problem.

WHIPLASH

The PETA empire strikes back

The story of two lab animals gone righteously **AWOL**, *Whiplash* has a decent story to tell, but falls down during the

actual telling of the tale. Players control a weasel named Spanx, who's connected by a chain to Redmond, a bunny who's undergone a few too many experiments. The two creatures progress through the Genron factory — a facility whose sole purpose is apparently to torture helpless animals — by

smashing Redmond into everything in sight: enemies, inanimate objects, switches, and scientists. There are the usual game mechanics for this genre: double jumps, gliding, zip lines and bizarre power-ups that turn Redmond into everything from a burning "hareball" to a heap of fur covered with toxic goo. The game has a decidedly black sense of humor: using the chicken cannon or watching a hamster fake his way out of electroshock experiments will bring a wry smile, or possibly a

wince, to your face.

Unfortunately, the problem with *Whiplash* is that there simply isn't enough to do. Rooms where experiments actually take place are linked by vast, repetitive corridors, and navigating the factory is the game's

most difficult puzzle. While it's fun to destroy everything from computers to cafeteria trays, the action gets old, fast. Compared to deeper offerings like *Jak II*, *Kya*, & *Ratchet and Clank*, *Whiplash* gets... well... whipped.

DOUG TRUEMAN

PSM
FINAL SCORE

6

OKAY

Whiplash might have been a smash five years ago, but today's action platformers have evolved past this.

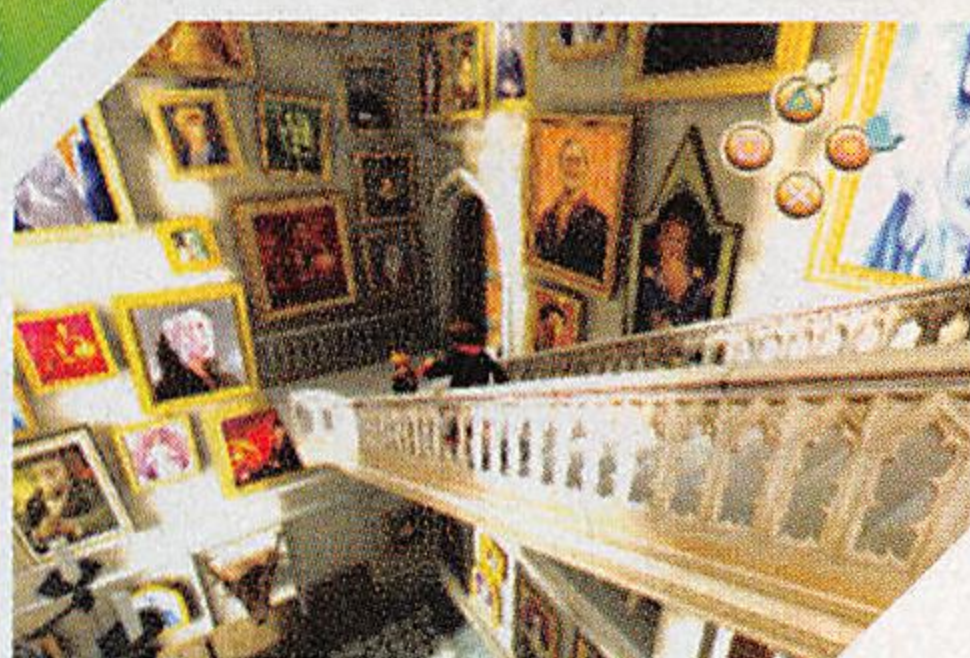
▼ Harry Potter's back again for the first time — that makes sense, right?



Just for the sake of clarity, this is not the same *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* that was originally released for PSone, Game

Boy and PC back in 2001. It's a new account of the young wizard's first adventure.

Okay, it's not entirely new — fans who played 2002's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* will notice that a huge amount of that game has been recycled here. The engine has been tweaked a bit, but the vast majority of the assets are the same, from the character models to the textures to the grounds of Hogwart's



▲ The Grand Staircase is beautiful, but the framerate tends to dip heavily in the larger environments.

itself. Percy still patrols the library, Hagrid's hut is still out near the



▲ Many of the locations are familiar, but there are plenty of new ones as well.



▲ The faces sometimes look a little ghastly in low light, and with Malfoy, that's an improvement.

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

Harry's back again... for the first time!

greenhouse, and the framerate still goes all to pieces in big rooms like the Entry Hall and the Grand Staircase. Bummer...

Gameplay is also very similar, with Harry completing simple platform dungeons to learn new spells, finding

Bertie Bott's beans everywhere, zipping around on his broomstick, and becoming embroiled in a mysterious adventure, this time involving the Sorcerer's Stone. It does feel a bit short, and some elements of the story are poorly told. But as simple, fundamental platform gaming, it's pleasant enough, and Harry's target lock is really very good. Framerate aside, the graphics are fine, and the load times seem much improved over the last game. Potter fans should be well pleased. ERIC BRATCHER

PSM
FINAL SCORE

7

GOOD

It's more fan service than hardcore action, but our biggest complaint is still that it's over too soon



MAX PAYNE 2



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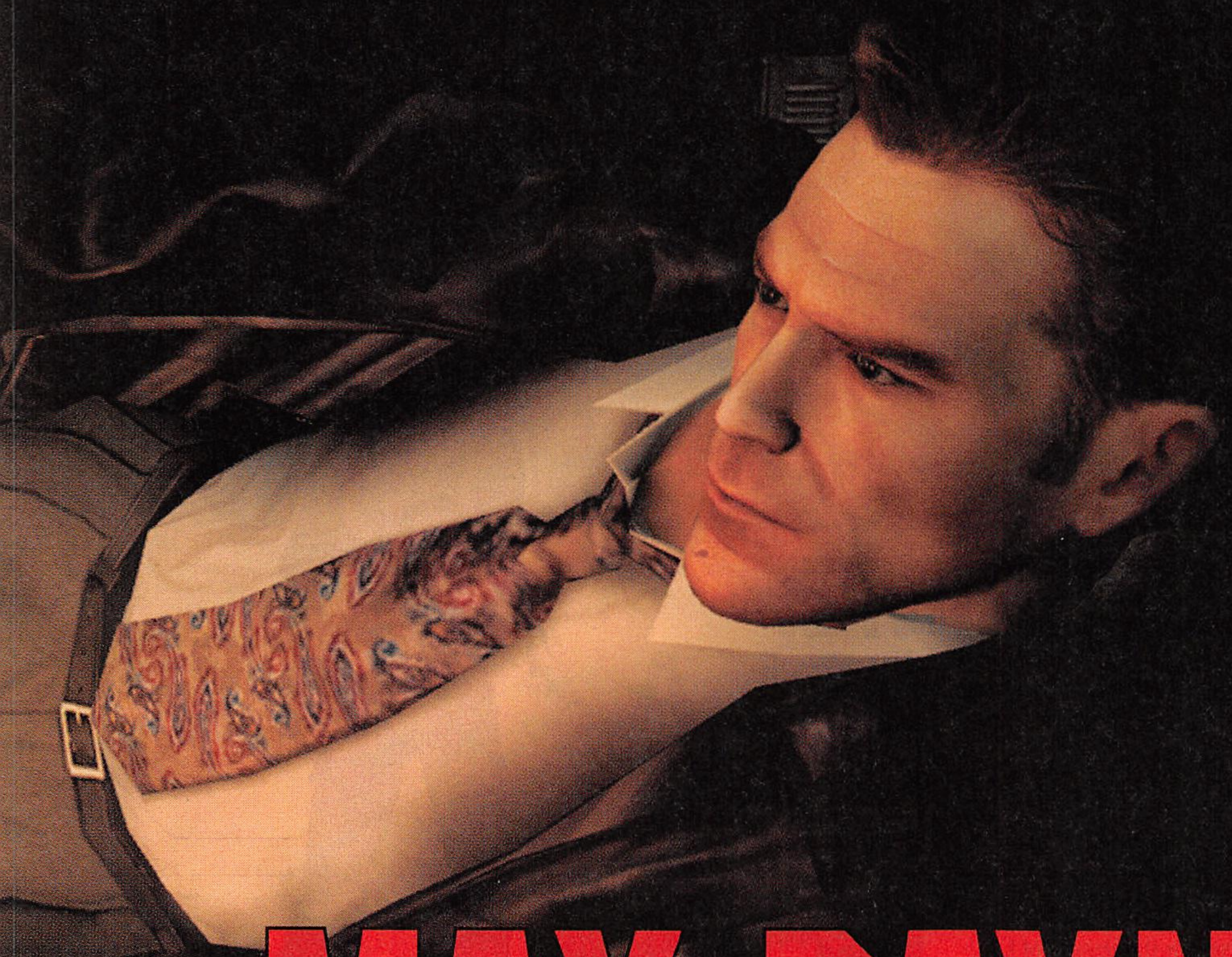
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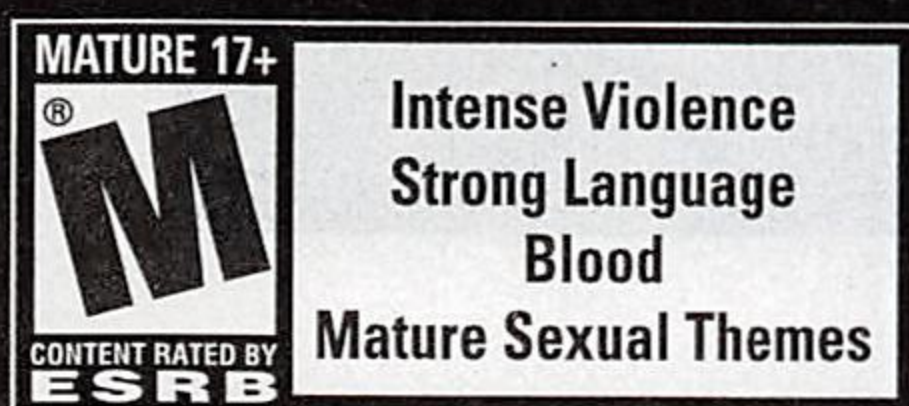
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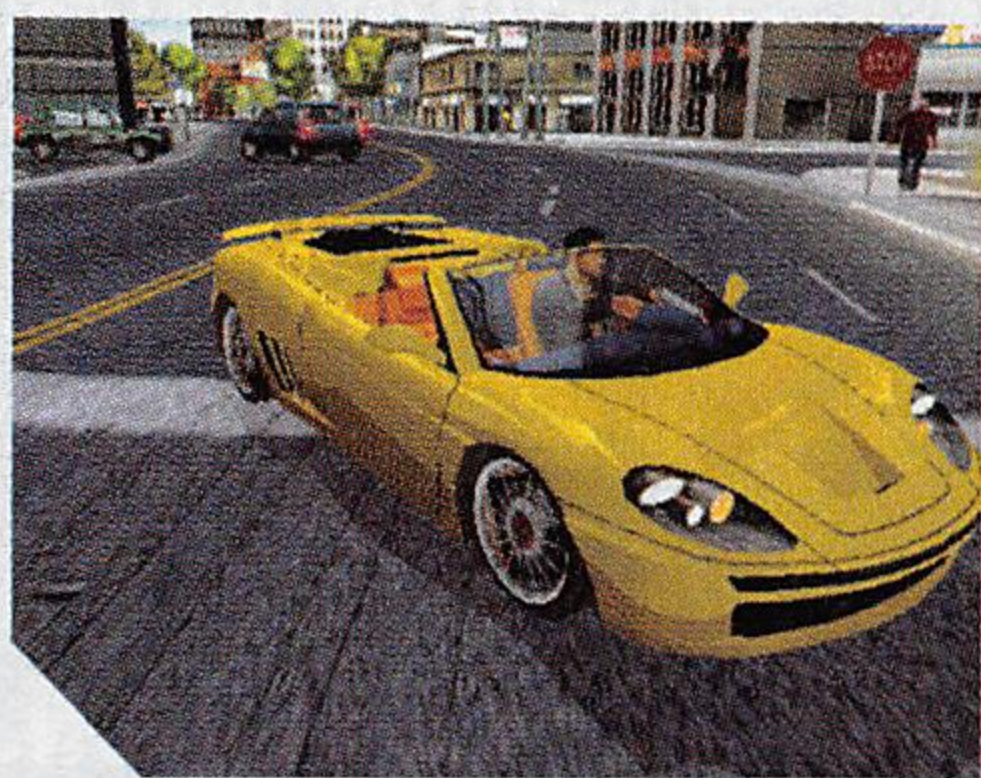
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PlayStation[®]2





▲ A huge portion of L.A. is recreated, complete with landmarks and gorgeous cars.



▲ Nick can precision shoot while still driving.

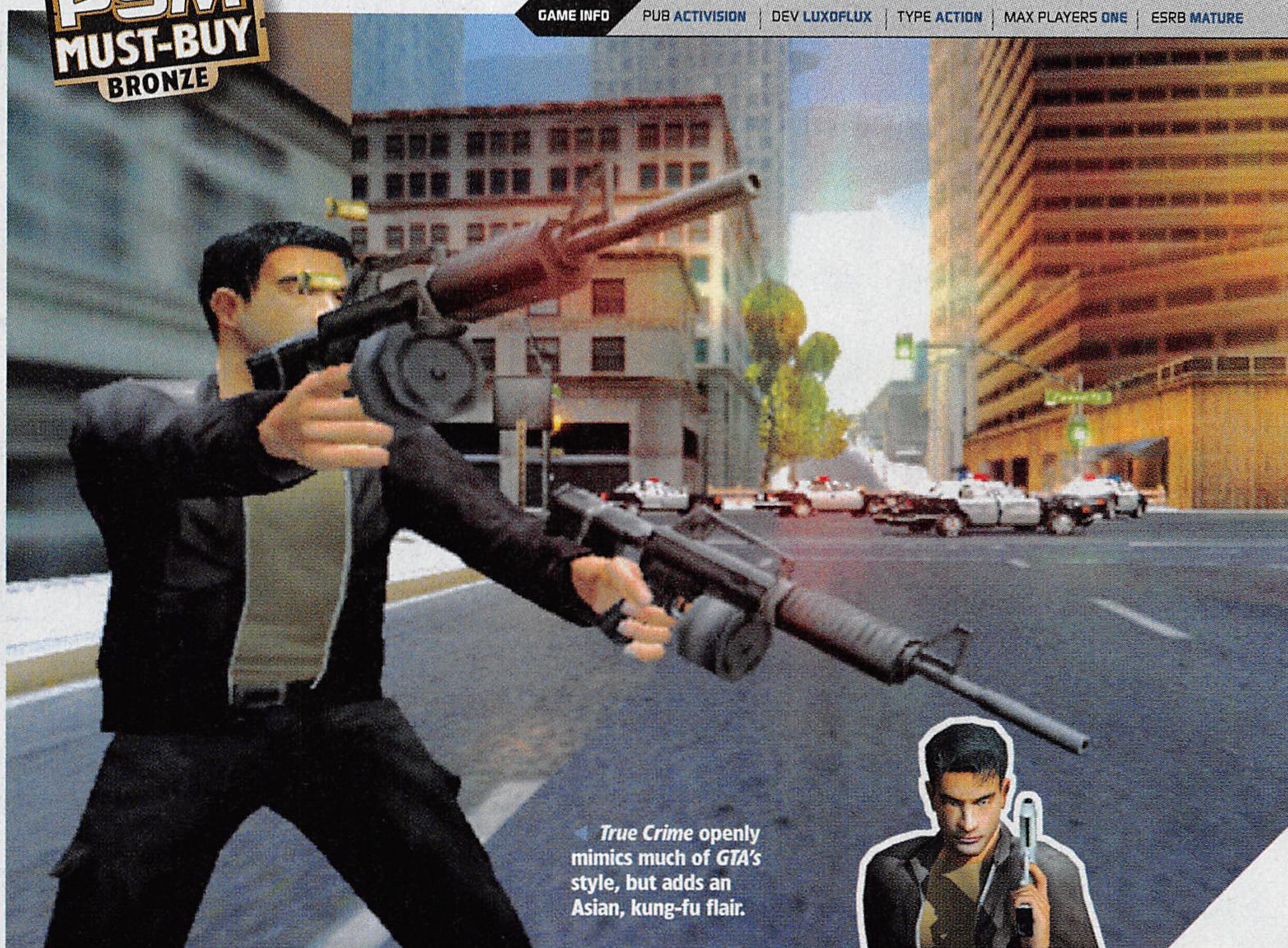
T rue Crime revolves around Nick Kang, a shoot-first-and-forget-about-the-questions kind of cop. He's trained in kung-fu,

packs a pair of twin pistols, and has a way with motorists just like that other famous PS2 carjacker. When things require a delicate touch, he walks on tiptoe, ices people with instant takeout moves and even carries a tranquilizer gun. The developers digitized over two hundred square miles of the City of Angels, cooked up a plot involving a suspended cop, and merged racing, fighting, shooting and stealth styles of gameplay.

Ethics play a major role in *True Crime*: Nick's officially a cop, so he should play nice, but he's also no cream puff. If you run around killing people for no reason, you'll find your path is violent, but short. Use more acceptable methods and you'll be swept up in a plot that's one of the best to hit the PS2 in a long time. Players are awarded points for how they deal with a situation, and those points can be cashed in to upgrade Nick's fighting, shooting and driving skills. Learned abilities include enhanced target accuracy, precision collision tactics and even Ryu's Dragon Punch from *Street Fighter*.

The problem with *True Crime* is that the developers bit off more than they could chew. In seeking to combine four of the most successful genres into one title, they watered each of them down. Whereas *Grand Theft Auto* has a single theme of "go anywhere, do anything," *True Crime* feels as though the game mechanics — while they serve the story — are

PSM
MUST-BUY
BRONZE



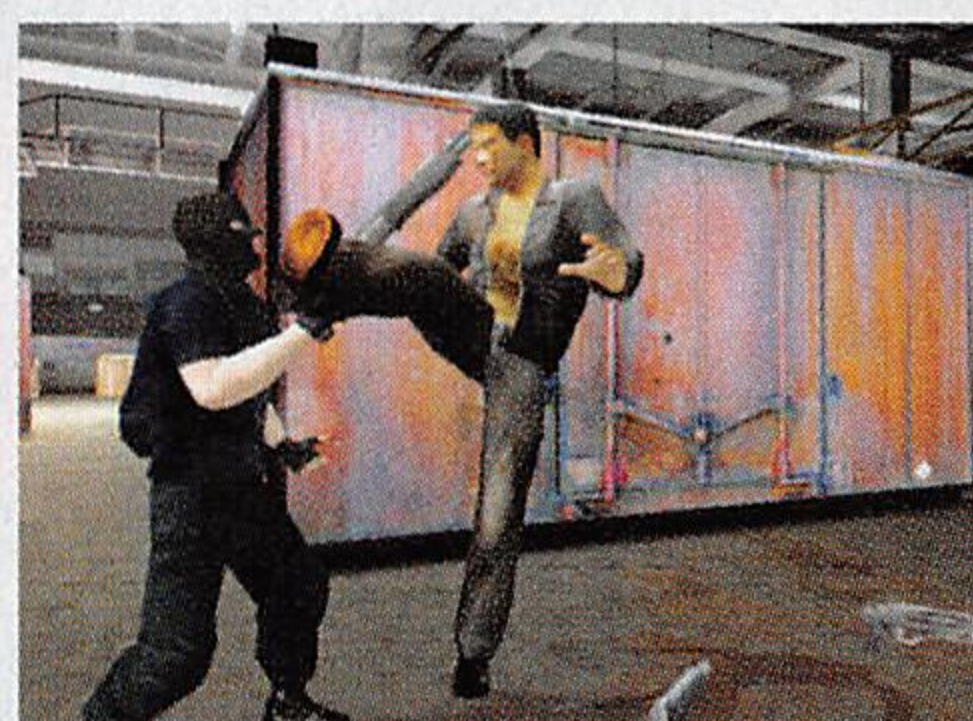
True Crime openly mimics much of GTA's style, but adds an Asian, kung-fu flair.

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF L.A.

Ambitious as GTA, but as good?

somewhat arbitrary and repetitive. Nick races through the streets of L.A., then either gets in a fight, gets in a shootout, or sneaks past security and then gets into a fight or a shootout. Instead of creating a living, breathing city, the game comes off as a succession of levels joined together by interactive driving segments filled with redundant, side-quest arrests you can make if you drive by a lesser crime on your way to the next mission.

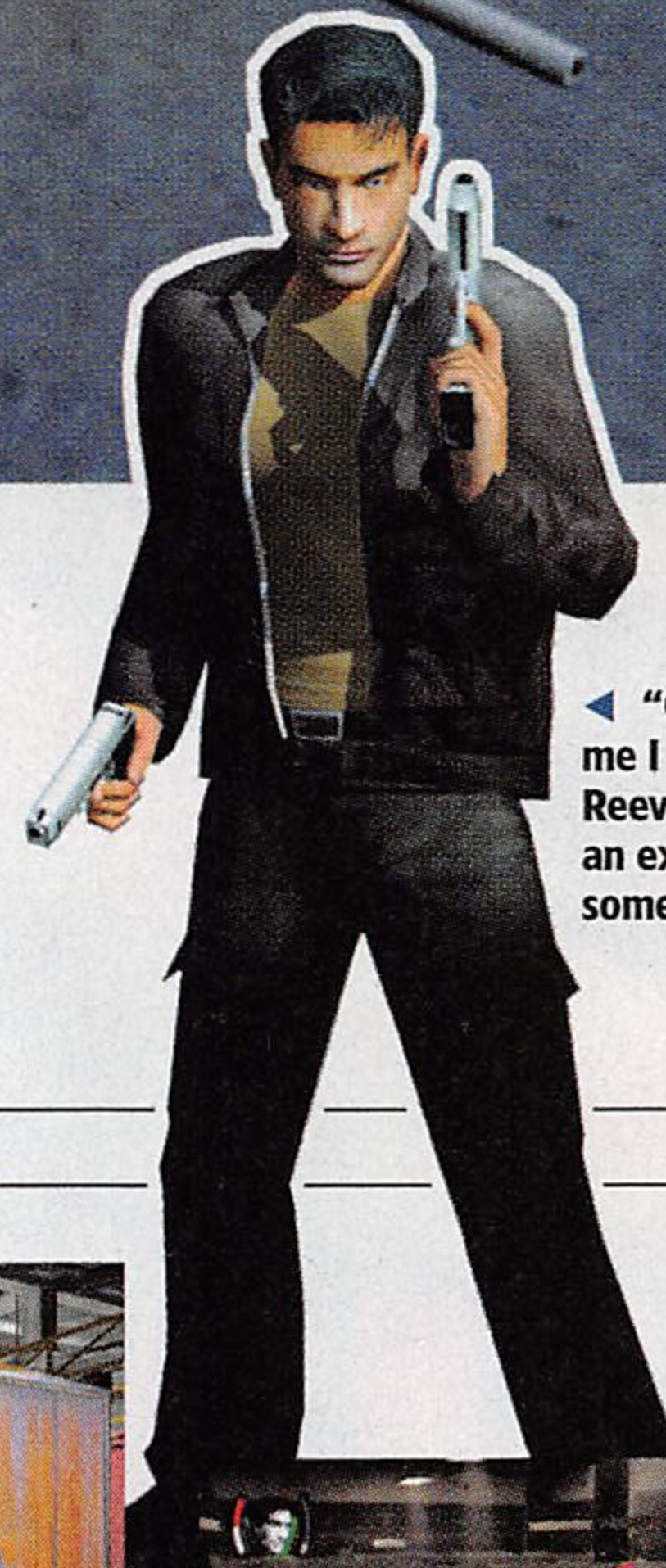
True Crime may lack the sheer depth that made *Vice City* a household word, but there is still much to be admired. Nick's auto-targeting system blows away Tommy Vercetti's like a headshot, and his combat style is remarkably deep for a game that doesn't have "Fighter" in its title. There are also a few tweaks that would have earned it a higher score. Nick desperately needs to be able to strafe during gunplay, finishing moves in fight sequences overlap, and his car has an odd habit of sticking to buildings. Little things, but they detract from the whole. DOUG TRUEMAN



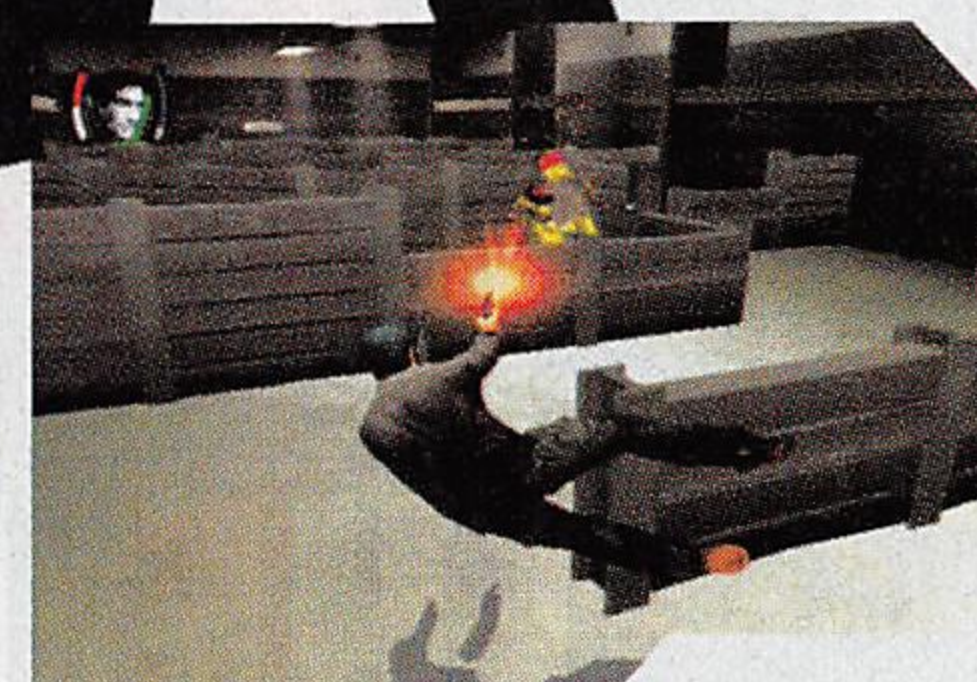
▲ Nick's move set is pretty deep, ranging from stealth sneaking to high kicking.



▲ Nice and easy. An itchy trigger finger will land you in a mess of paperwork.



◀ "Go ahead ... tell me I look like Keanu Reeves again. I need an excuse to shoot somebody."



▲ Players can tackle obstacle courses for extra firepower.

HOW IT STACKS UP

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	9
Grand Theft Auto 3	9
True Crime: Streets Of L.A.	8
Dead to Rights	8
Roadkill	7

PSM
FINAL SCORE

8

VERY GOOD

True Crime: Streets Of L.A. falls short of being the *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* of Los Angeles, but it's damn entertaining.



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Mad Catz Retrocon PS2 Controller

M.S.R.P.: \$24.99

Almost identical in size and thickness to the original NES gamepad, the Retrocon has a few notable weaknesses.

The NES pad was about as ergonomic as a brick, so this feel-alike is not as comfortable in the hand as today's styles. The downsized analog sticks may trouble some, and the shoulder buttons can be tough to hit.

But here's the thing: the Retrocon is so flat-out cool that we love it anyhow, and are usually able to forgive its mechanical shortcomings. It looks great, especially when the lights are dim enough to show off the illuminated pad and buttons, and it even has decent vibration motors. Of course, if you have no nostalgic NES love, there's no reason to buy this. But if you think the idea rocks, you'll likely think the controller does as well. **ERIC BRATCHER**



▲ The Retrocon is perfectly named: the more you love retro gaming, the more you'll love this controller.

Nuby Limited Edition Soul Calibur II Arcade Stick

M.S.R.P.: \$39.99

If there ever was an awesome fighting game whose default button layout begged for an arcade stick, it's *Soul Calibur II*. Luckily, Nuby has come to the rescue with this universal, *SCII*-themed unit that plugs into PS2, Xbox, or even GameCube. Our hands rested comfortably on it, and it fits very well in one's lap, so you don't even need a table to set it upon.

As for performance, the control stick has a nice tension and throw, and button size and spacing is practically perfect. We were immediately able to pull off moves that are nearly impossible on the regular Dual Shock 2. It also has programmable macros and a turbo button, in case you want to unleash it on Konami's gorgeous, upcoming *Gradius V*.



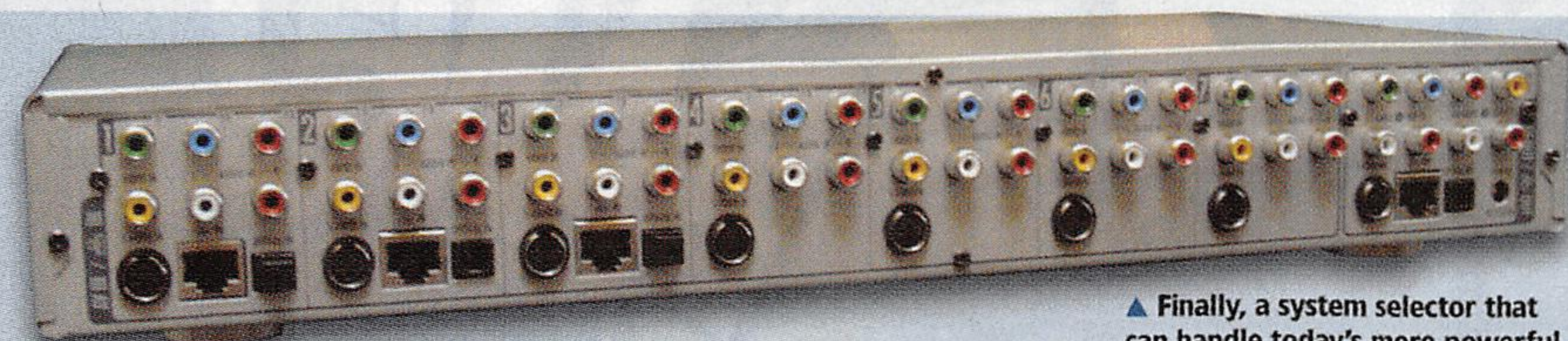
▲ If you're in the market for an arcade stick, this good-looking unit is an excellent choice.

PSM FINAL SCORE 6

It's tough to rate this thing. Forgiving fans of retro gaming can add two points, and those with no NES history should subtract two.

PSM FINAL SCORE 8

Our favorite PS2 arcade stick will probably always be the massive Interact Shadowblade, but this versatile newcomer definitely delivers.



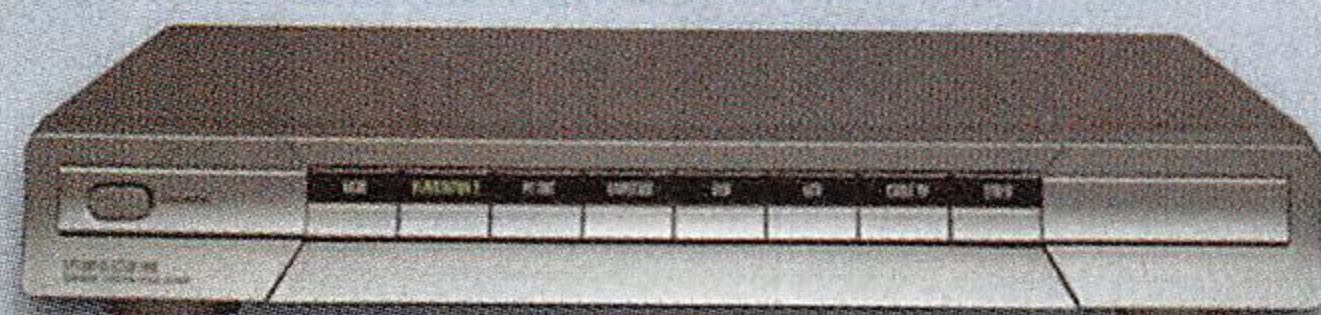
Pelican System Selector Pro

M.S.R.P.: \$99.99

This sleek, metal, sports car of a system selector comes absolutely jammed with features. You can hook up a whopping seven systems via component, composite, or S-video connections, and it also has broadband internet and optical audio support for three of those systems. Plus, there's an eighth set of front-mounted plugs as well, in case you find a component cable for that old Atari. It even comes with its own cables, one composite and one component, to connect to your TV.

The only troubles? It's costly, and our previous favorite system selector, the dreamGEAR Multimedia Docking Station, has two features we really miss: it had a remote, and it could switch from one input to another automatically, simply selecting whichever console powered up. But given all the other features the System Selector Pro adds, we'll gladly deal with the extra button press. **ERIC BRATCHER**

▲ Finally, a system selector that can handle today's more powerful consoles.

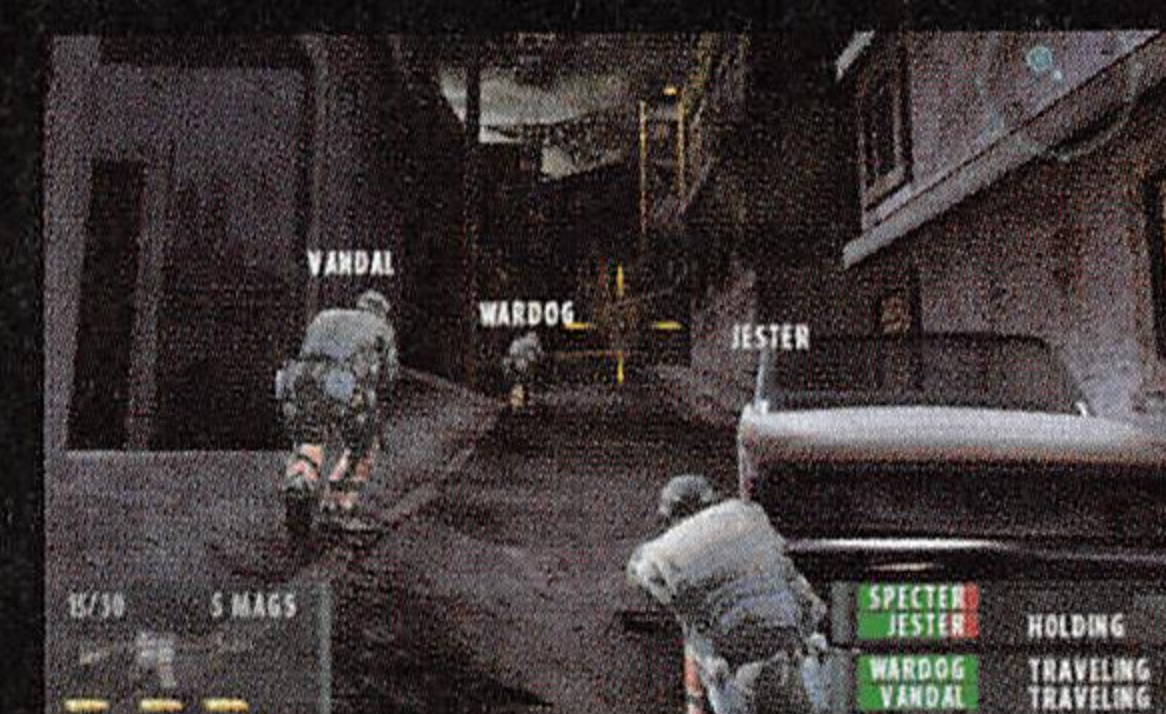


▲ The System Selector Pro is big — in fact, so is its price tag — but it's the best system selector ever.

PSM FINAL SCORE 9

Meet the first truly next generation system selector. If it had auto-switching and a remote, it'd be a perfect 10.

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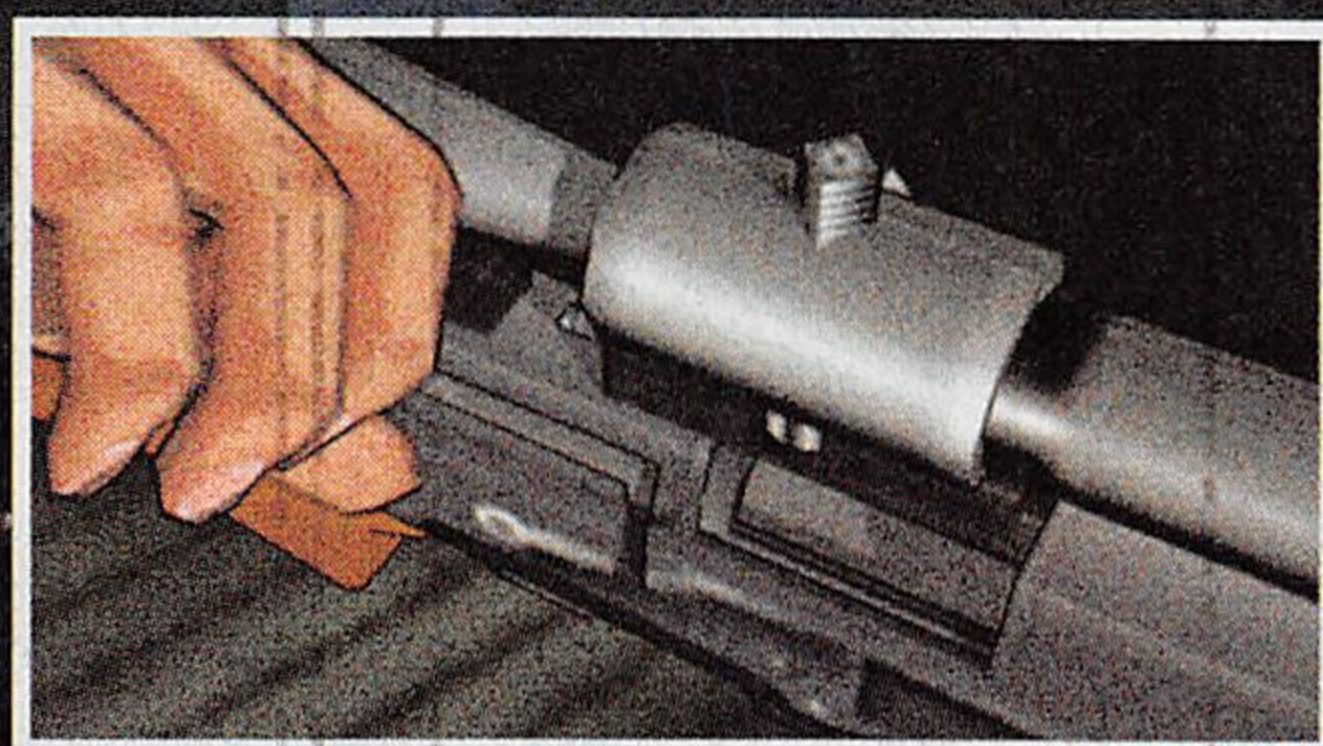
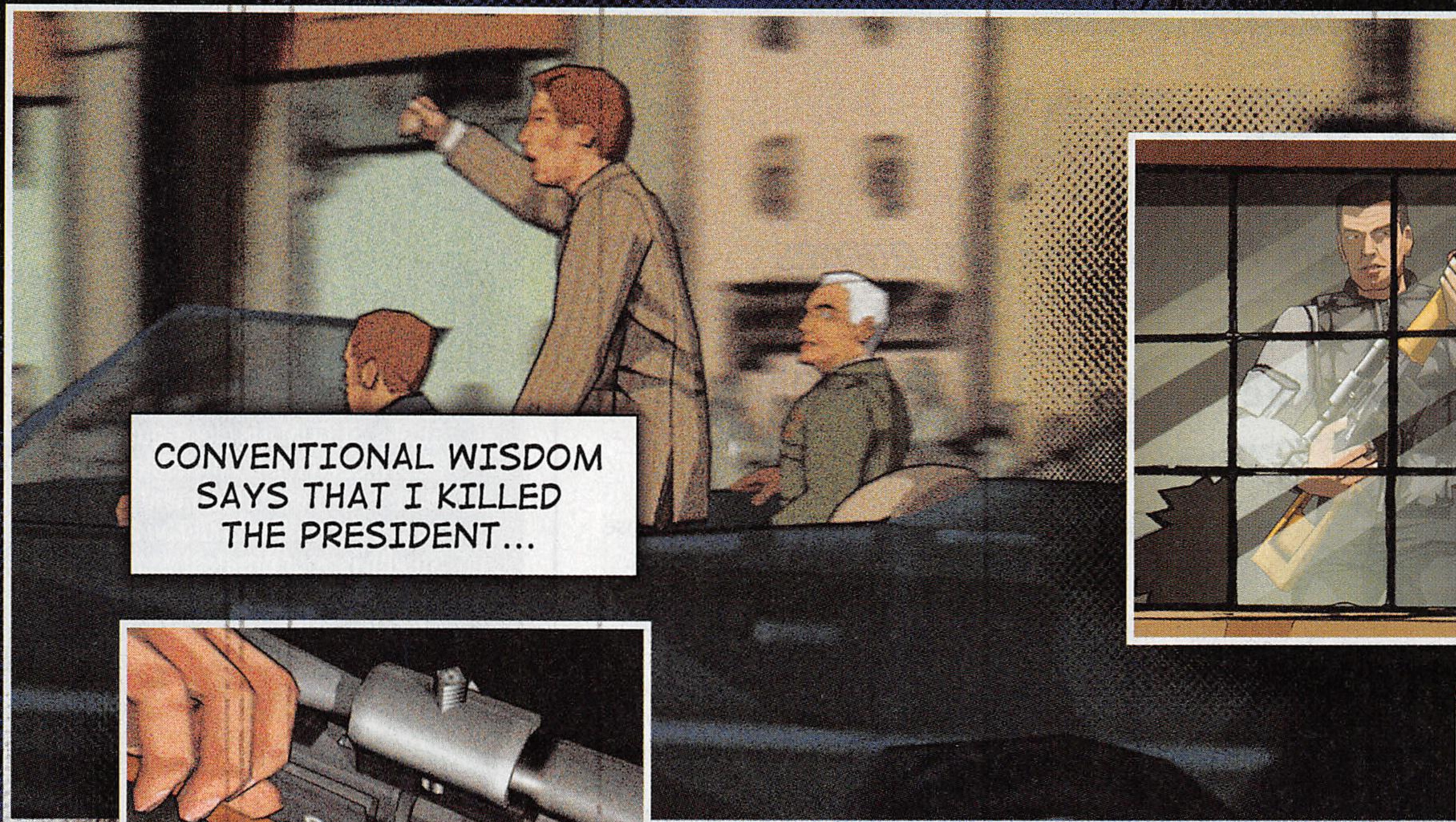


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Blood
Violence

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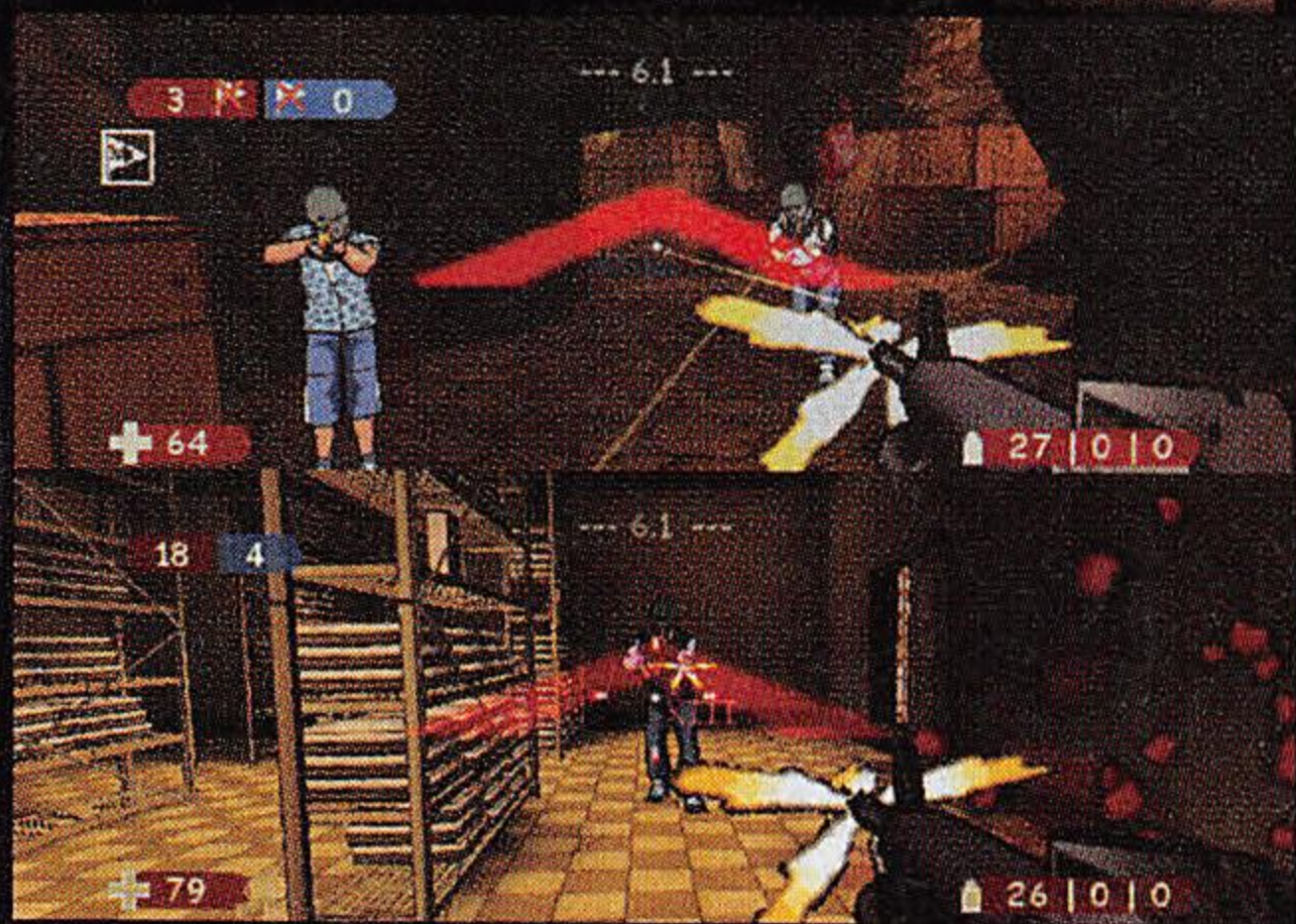
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PUB ENCORE | DEV BLACK OPS | MAX PLAYERS ONE | RATED MATURE



▲ *Fugitive Hunter: War on Terror* has a certain lowbrow, "kill the terrorists" appeal, but the gameplay is crap.

FUGITIVE HUNTER: WAR ON TERROR

After being dropped by Atari, *Fugitive Hunter* was thought to be not coming out at all. At the last moment, the game was picked up by Encore, even with its underwhelming graphics engine (which provides for some very interesting bugs... see below), and very basic first person shooter gameplay.

Built on a premise that allows players to head up an anti-terrorist task force, *Fugitive Hunter* sports one of the most hated final bosses in all of videogame history: namely, Osama Bin Laden. Set up so that gamers can eventually track him down by weaving their way through other radical kingpins, *War on Terror* sports eleven different bad guys in all; each with their own dedicated army of followers and hideouts set in five real-world locations.

The action is mostly basic fps gameplay, with the player wielding the typical powerful arsenal of weapons (including a bouncing grenade that detonated when the player triggered it, which we liked a lot). When it's time to handcuff a boss, you enter into a third-person, hand-to-hand combat mini-game that has potential, but needs polish. But *Fugitive Hunter* falls flat, both because of its borderline-terrible visuals and because it isn't any fun.

First off, the game can be completed in just a few hours, with little to no challenge at all. True, enemies re-spawn like rabbits, but it doesn't really matter: their artificial intelligence is so dim-witted, they'll usually just stand there and fire randomly until you whack them.

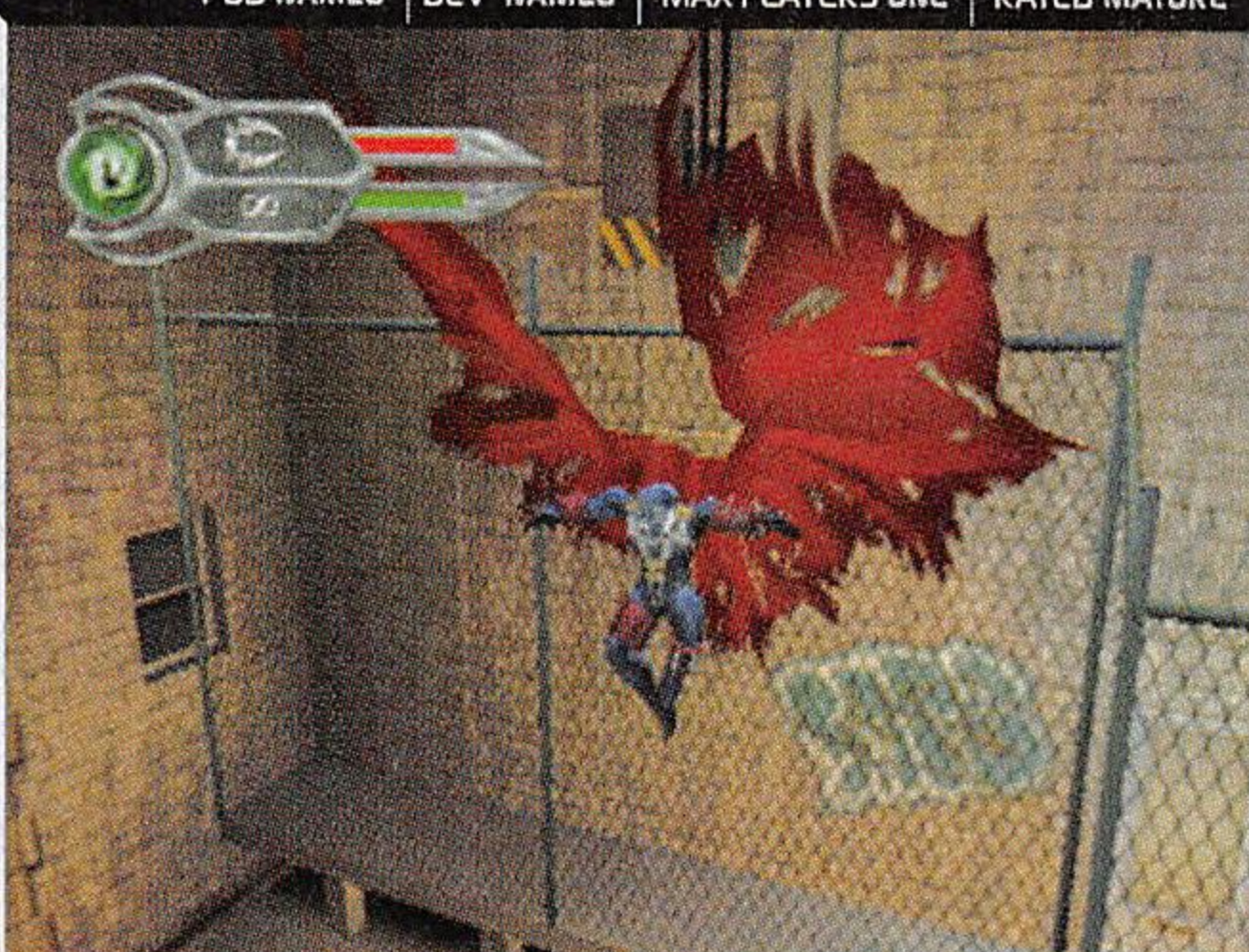
But that's not even the half of it, because *War on Terror* is just plain glitchy. Enemies appear and disappear for no reason, players get caught on invisible hitches while navigating the poorly designed maps, and bullets sometimes whiz through granite walls like they aren't even there. Not good.

Which, frankly, sums up how we feel about *Fugitive Hunter*: it just isn't any good. With so many gameplay problems, lack of challenges, and an absolute treasure trove of better FPS titles out there for PS2, there's no reason to give this one a second thought. You're going to want to skip this title like a rock into a pond.

JEREMY DUNHAM

PSM **3** **BAD** Its fighting segments are intriguing, but *Fugitive Hunter* is a waste of time.
FINAL SCORE

PUB NAMCO | DEV NAMCO | MAX PLAYERS ONE | RATED MATURE



▲ *Spawn's* cape animations are simply amazing, especially when he moves.

SPAWN: ARMAGEDDON

Let's be honest: *Spawn's* previous videogames have been crappy. Part of the reason for their failure is that past games always treated Spawn as an action hero, rather than delving into the multifaceted nature of the conflicted character. Namco's take on *Spawn* nails both the atmosphere and drama inherent in the story, but is hampered by a puddle-deep fighting engine.

Covering the first 100 issues of the comic book series, *Spawn: Armageddon* draws liberally from old-school beat 'em-ups like *Final Fight* and modern actioners like *Devil May Cry*. It features both familiar characters, such as Violator and Jason Wynn and new characters created specifically for the game. Although the Amazonian-inspired Angels are here, Angela herself is absent — probably a licensing issue.

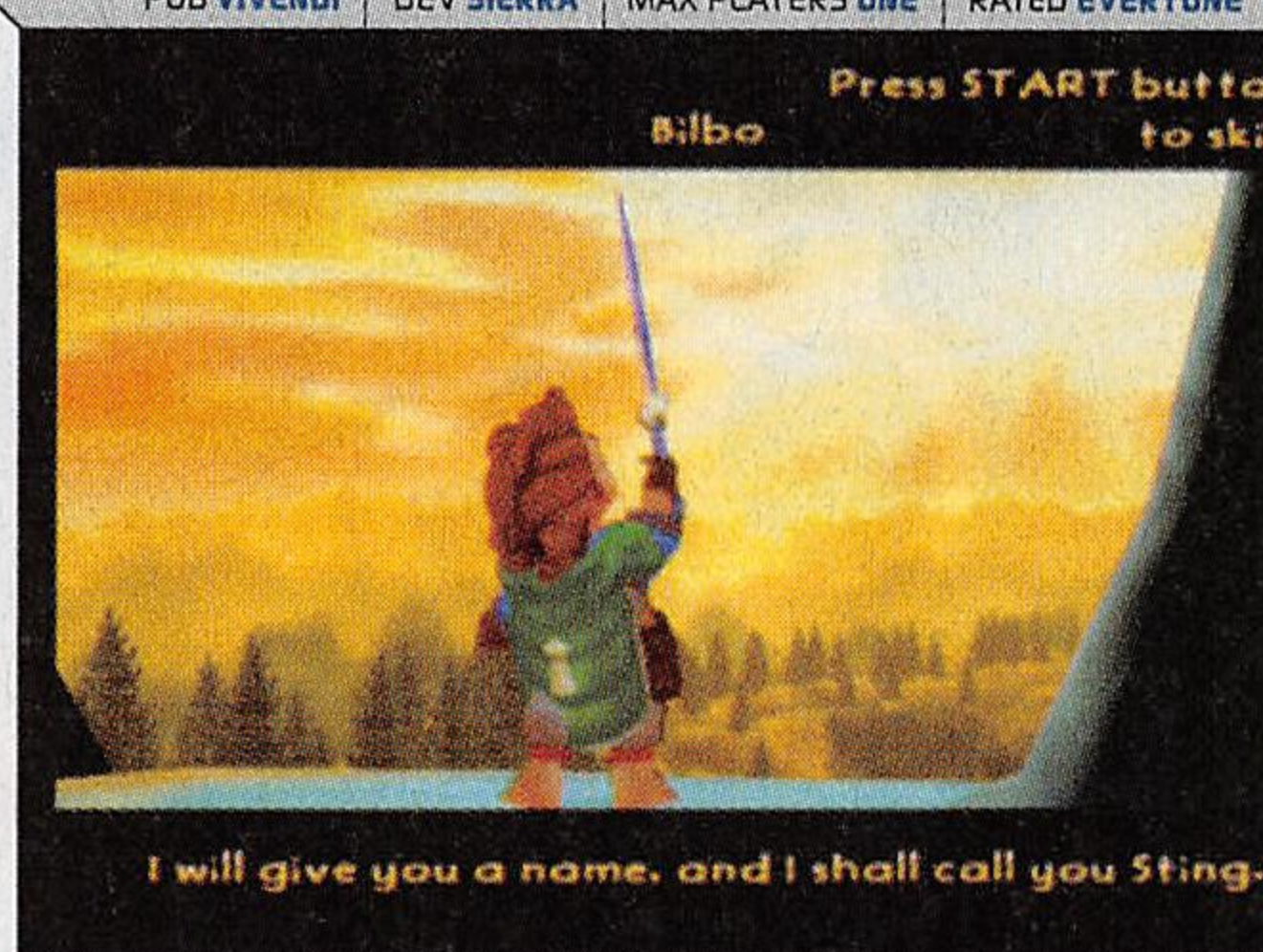
In-game environments preserve the look and feel of the comic, with Spawn starting out in the city and traveling to both Hell and an Angelic space station. Spawn himself is nicely rendered and his cape is absolutely gorgeous while gliding. Unfortunately, a few camera glitches mar the experience, with disappearing textures occurring when the camera is pushed into an odd position. It is also possible for the camera to get stuck against a wall when fighting, which can make it difficult to see your opponent.

The fighting engine in the game is serviceable, but simplistic. If you have any visions of *Soul Calibur*-style depth, put them out of your head right now. *Spawn* is a brawler through and through, and subtlety is sorely lacking. For that matter, so are the ability to block and advanced techniques, such as reversals. A good selection of weapons and Necroplasm powers gives the game some variety, but a little more depth in the hand-to-hand combat would have been much preferred.

For what it is, *Spawn: Armageddon* is a decent ride and is sure to please any fans of the comic series. However, much like Capcom's *Chaos Legion*, the game is lacking in lasting appeal. Once you've made that trip through the underworld, there isn't quite enough incentive to go back. ADAM PAVLACKA

PSM **7** **GOOD** A simplistic combat engine prevents this game from shining.
FINAL SCORE

PUB VIVENDI | DEV SIERRA | MAX PLAYERS ONE | RATED EVERYONE



▲ It's certainly pretty enough, but the gameplay is a friggin' sedative. Yawn!

THE HOBBIT

Many a fan has drifted off to sleep while reading about the adventures of Bilbo Baggins, the One Ring, Gollum and Smaug the Dragon. Unfortunately, the same can be said about the latest video game based on Tolkien's masterpiece, and that ain't good.

The game loosely follows the plot of the novel. Bilbo is just a quiet hobbit who despises adventure — not the typical adventure hero. Nonetheless, he one day gets a visit from that famous wizard, Gandalf the Grey. A pack of dwarves soon arrive for tea, and his world is turned upside-down.

The technical aspects of the game are competent. Middle-earth looks colorful and lively, the characters all speak intelligibly with British accents, and the medieval soundtrack is arguably the best part of the game. The frame rate drops a tad when the screen gets busy, but for the most part, it's not an issue.

Gameplay, however, is definitely an issue. Bilbo picks up courage gems, fights off creatures with his walking stick (or "Sting", his sword), crawls on tiptoe, and performs tasks for his fellow Hobbits and Dwarves. This all sounds fine, but it really isn't. This is because Bilbo's tasks tend to be incredibly mundane: knocking down apples from trees, finding a needle in a haystack, stealing the wallet from a Troll, healing an elf, and the like. For lack of a better word, *The Hobbit* is simply boring. Swordplay is incredibly basic, and few of the tasks induce any sense of adventure — they're just dull. There is no tension even during Bilbo's stealth mode, as one wrong step just means you're starting over.

Frankly, the game plays more like a three-dimensional version of Sierra's famous *King's Quest* series on the PC than a contemporary action game, but without the wit, charm, or creative genius. Experienced gamers will find themselves falling asleep with controller in hand, and kids who have been raised expecting a synaptic overload will ditch it almost immediately for EA's *Lord of the Rings* series. If you have a (very) small child and want to ease him or her gently into interactive entertainment, this is a good way to start, but it's just too dull for seasoned players. DOUG TRUEMAN

PSM **5** **SO-SO** *The Hobbit* blandly proves that you can't judge a book by its game.
FINAL SCORE

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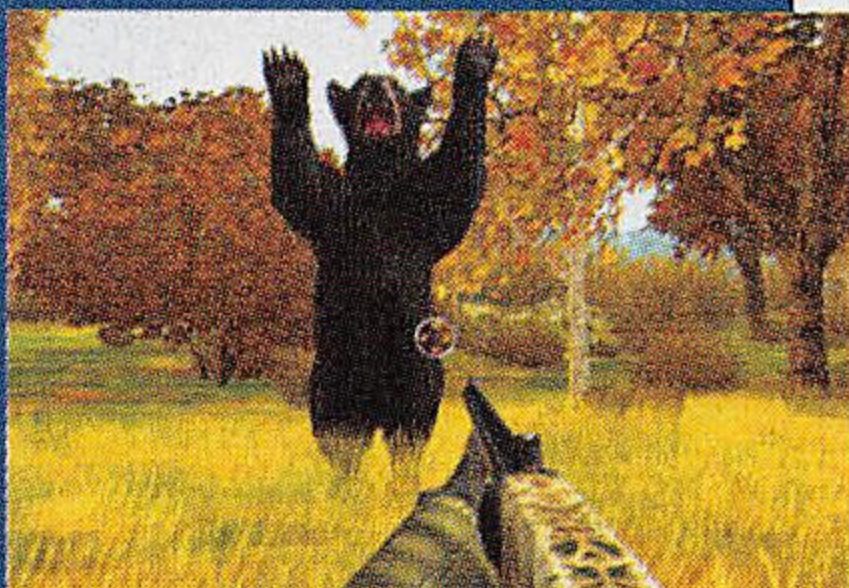
PUB ACTIVISION VALUE | DEV SANDGRAIN | MAX PLAYERS ONE | RATED TEEN

CABELA'S DANGEROUS HUNTS

It's an undeniable fact that hunting games tend to be boring. Let's face it: real-world hunting is about 2% shooting and 98%

wandering through the woods looking for something to shoot.

However, Activision Value's latest offering compensates by ignoring Bambi and instead setting your fps sights on creatures like grizzly bears, leopards, rhinos,



▲ *Dangerous Hunts* has more action than the typical hunting game.

wild boar, and the vicious gemsbok. Thus, the pace is faster and the mood more tense because your quarry can beat your ass.

Unfortunately, the more action-oriented focus reveals some gameplay weaknesses. Controls are too sensitive even at the lowest setting, animal AI is set to "charge!" constantly, and collision detection is rugged. Environments are pretty, models look nice, but animate unevenly, and we really missed the third-person viewpoint option, especially when surrounded by wolves. **ERIC BRATCHER**

PSM 6 OKAY Some really rough edges, but it'll definitely get your blood flowing.
FINAL SCORE

PUB THQ | DEV BLITZ | MAX PLAYERS ONE | RATED EVERYONE

THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS IN BREAKIN' DA RULES

The latest in THQ's line of Nickelodeon-inspired titles, *The Fairly OddParents in Breakin' Da Rules* is definitely a kid's

title — but it's still not half bad. The player controls Timmy, a typical little boy, whose constant companions are his two fairy godparents: the motherly Wanda and the lovably idiotic Cosmo.



▲ Sure, it's based on a cartoon, but it's a pretty rockin' cartoon.

Gameplay follows the typical "jump, shoot, and collect" platform theme, but with the character taking on the role of a superhero in a *Tick*-like comic book world, fighting his way out of a *Tron*-inspired videogame, and so on, there's a good bit of variety. Graphics and camera are slightly below average, and the game is both short and easy, but the constantly changing gameplay, Cosmo's goofball comments and the game's irreverent sense of humor (Spatula Woman?) are worth experiencing anyhow. **ERIC BRATCHER**

PSM 6 OKAY A kiddy game funny enough for the big kids to enjoy.
FINAL SCORE

PUB BANDAI | DEV BANDAI | MAX PLAYERS TWO | RATED EVERYONE

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: ENCOUNTERS IN SPACE

Kind of like *Zone of the Enders* without the eye-popping graphics or ease of control, this space-faring actioner

was released with so little fanfare it practically snuck onto store shelves. It turns out to be pretty good — even if its mechanics are a bit on the rusty side.

Its main problem is just getting used to controlling your Gundam within the 3D space it inhabits. After that learning curve is over, however, *Gundam* freaks should love the game's five playable modes and the inclusion of every iteration in the series so far: including *Gundam Seed* and *Gundam Wing*.

Combined with 80 minutes of footage from the anime and a cool experience point system, these elements make for quite an enjoyable little experience. Recommended heavily for fans of the series and robot freaks. **JEREMY DUNHAM**



▲ *Encounters in Space* is a fun ride for robot lovers.

PSM 7 GOOD Rough controls, but *Gundam* and giant robot fans should love it.
FINAL SCORE

PUB EA | DEV WARTHOG | MAX PLAYERS ONE | RATING EVERYONE

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

Loosely based on the motion picture of the same name, this isn't exactly the ultimate platformer, but it does provide plenty of good old-fashioned jumping action and a varied multitude of challenges. Nearly every stage offers something different, from fetch quests and hidden bonuses to rescue missions and simple coin collection. The

player switches between Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck at will, and given their differing powers and abilities, one character will prove more useful than others in most situations. Sometimes, you'll even need to use the pair in tandem to advance.



▲ It isn't the best platformer in the world, but it's certainly worth a try.

The game's weaknesses are fairly typical of mainstream-focused offerings: it's easy and a tad short, the visuals are simple, and the camera is imperfect, especially during vertical jumping challenges, but the good definitely outweighs the bad.

JEREMY DUNHAM

PSM 7 GOOD Basic graphics and reduced challenge aside, this is more fun than troublesome.
FINAL SCORE

PUB CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT | DEV GENKI | MAX PLAYERS TWO | RATED TEEN

TOKYO EXTREME RACER 3

The first *Tokyo Extreme Racer* was an innovative title that showcased the Japanese underground street racing culture, but in the years since its debut, other developers have outstripped it.

The biggest problem with the game is the emptiness of the world. The highways are virtually empty, and the generic-looking buildings lining the track lack detail. Speed is also an issue, with much of the game feeling as if it is moving in slow motion.

Races occur when you encounter an opponent on the freeway and flash your lights to signal "it's on". Winning earns you cash to upgrade your car and eventually opens up more freeway.

Fans of the series will appreciate *TXR3*'s consistency, and at \$20, it isn't a daunting investment, but adrenaline junkies will likely find this game too pedestrian. **ADAM PAVLACKA**



▲ To win, you must stay in front of your opponent for a certain time.

PSM 5 SO-SO Next to *Midnight Club 2*, *TXR3* looks dated and is downright boring.
FINAL SCORE

PUB SEGA | DEV HITMAKER | MAX PLAYERS TWO | RATED TEEN

VIRTUAL ON: MARZ

We've loved this franchise ever since it debuted in the arcades back in 1995, which makes this is a very difficult review for us to write — *Virtual On: MARZ* is a huge disappointment.

The problem is that your VRs (the game's word for "giant freakin' robots with lotsa guns") move far too sluggishly and control badly regardless of which button layout one chooses (including the hotly anticipated, arcade-style, twin stick layout).

For a game in which high-speed dashing and keeping the enemy in sight at all times is critical, this crippled control and decreased speed detracts from gameplay. Sure, 40+ playable VRs and split screen multiplayer are cool, and fighting multiple opponents while accompanied by an AI wingman is tolerable, but voiceovers are dreadful and both graphics and arena design are ho-hum. What a heartbreaker. **ERIC BRATCHER**



▲ How can the PS2 sequel control worse than the Sega Saturn original?

PSM 5 SO-SO This game is a pale shadow of what it used to be. Blindly loyal fans only, please.
FINAL SCORE



50

40

30

20

10

Welcome



This is the Asphalt Arena.

The real artificial turf. It's a hundred-yard long stage.

You got the goods to headline here?

Hundreds of NFL superstars and legends are waiting in
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Forget your helmet and rulebook, wanna-be. Style rules at this party.

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PlayStation 2



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SCOREBOARD

Don't buy a game until you check here first!

SCORE ARCHIVE

Iss.	Month	Game Name	Score	Genre	Publisher	Iss.	Month	Game Name	Score	Genre	Publisher
79	Hol-03	Backyard Wrestling	4	Fighting	Eidos	78	Dec-03	Warhammer 40,000: FW	9	FPS	THQ
79	Hol-03	Beyond Good & Evil	9	Adventure	UbiSoft	78	Dec-03	XGRA	6	Racing	Acclaim
79	Hol-03	Bionical	6	Action	EA/Lego	77	Nov-03	Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	6	Shooter	Activision
79	Hol-03	Bloody Roar 4	6	Fighting	Konami/Hudson	77	Nov-03	DDRMax 2	9	Dancing	Konami
79	Hol-03	Conflict: Desert Storm II	7	Action	Gotham	77	Nov-03	Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	8	Action	Activision
79	Hol-03	Crash Nitro Kart	8	Racing	Vivendi	77	Nov-03	Dynasty Tactics 2	7	Fighting	Koei
79	Hol-03	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	7	Fighting	Atari	77	Nov-03	ESPN NHL Hockey	9	Sports	Sega
79	Hol-03	Dynasty Warriors 4 XL	8	Fighting	Koei	77	Nov-03	EyeToy: Play	7	Party	Sony CEA
79	Hol-03	ESPN College Hoops	8	Sports	Sega	77	Nov-03	Freedom Fighters	8	Action	EA
79	Hol-03	Gladiator: Sword Of Vengeance	8	Fighting	Acclaim	77	Nov-03	Jak II	10	Action	Sony CEA
79	Hol-03	Goblin Commander	6	Action	Jaleco	77	Nov-03	Lethal Skies II	8	Air Combat	Sammy
79	Hol-03	Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	7	Sports	EA Games	77	Nov-03	Mega Man X7	7	Platform	Capcom
79	Hol-03	The Haunted Mansion	8	Adventure	TDK Interactive	77	Nov-03	NASCAR Thunder 2004	8	Racing	EA
79	Hol-03	I-Ninja	7	Action	Namco	77	Nov-03	NHL Hitz Pro	8	Sports	Midway
79	Hol-03	Kya: Dark Lineage	9	Action	Atari	77	Nov-03	Robin Hood: DOTC	6	Strategy/Action	Capcom
79	Hol-03	Lord Of The Rings: ROTK	8	Action	EA	77	Nov-03	Rugby 2004	7	Sports	EA Sports
79	Hol-03	March Madness 2004	9	Sports	EA Sports	77	Nov-03	The Simpsons: Hit And Run	8	Action	Vivendi
79	Hol-03	Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun	9	FPS	EA Games	77	Nov-03	Space Channel 5: Special Edition	8	Music	Agetec
79	Hol-03	Midway Arcade Treasures	7	Arcade	Midway	77	Nov-03	Starsky & Hutch	7	Action	Gotham
79	Hol-03	Monster Rancher 4	8	Fighting	Tecmo	77	Nov-03	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	9	Sports	EA
79	Hol-03	NBA Shootout 2004	6	Sports	Sony	77	Nov-03	Wallace & Gromit	8	Action	Bam!
79	Hol-03	NCAA Final Four 2004	6	Sports	Sony	76	Oct-03	Alter Echo	7	Action	THQ
79	Hol-03	Need For Speed Underground	8	Racing	EA	76	Oct-03	Bombastic	8	Puzzle	Capcom
79	Hol-03	Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time	8	Adventure	UbiSoft	76	Oct-03	Buffy The Vampire Slayer	9	Action	Vivendi Univ.
79	Hol-03	RPG Maker 2	8	RPG	Agetec	76	Oct-03	Disgaea: Hour Of Darkness	7	RPG	Atlus
79	Hol-03	Secret Weapons Over Normandy	8	Air Combat	LucasArts	76	Oct-03	Futurama	6	Action/Adventure	Vivendi Univ.
79	Hol-03	Sphinx And The Cursed Mummy	8	Action	THQ	76	Oct-03	The Great Escape	5	Action	Take Two Int.
79	Hol-03	Tak And The Power Of Juju	7	Action	THQ	76	Oct-03	.hack//OUTBREAK	7	RPG	Bandai
79	Hol-03	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	5	Action	Konami	76	Oct-03	NCAA Gamebreaker 2004	6	Sports	Sony CEA
79	Hol-03	XIII	7	Action	UbiSoft	76	Oct-03	NFL Blitz Pro	7	Sports	Midway
78	Dec-03	Batman: Rise Of Sin Tzu	6	Action	UbiSoft	76	Oct-03	NFL Gameday 2004	7	Sports	Sony CEA
78	Dec-03	Castlevania: Lament Of Innocence	9	Action	Konami	76	Oct-03	NHL 2004	8	Sports	EA Sports
78	Dec-03	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	7	Fighting	UbiSoft	76	Oct-03	Romance of the Three Kingdoms	8	Strategy	Koei
78	Dec-03	ESPN NBA Basketball	9	Sports	Sega	76	Oct-03	Soul Calibur II	9	Fighting	Namco
78	Dec-03	FIFA Soccer 2004	8	Sports	EA	76	Oct-03	Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	6	Racing	THQ
78	Dec-03	Gladius	8	Action/RPG	LucasArts	75	Sep-03	Alien Vs. Predator: Extinction	7	Action	EA
78	Dec-03	Karaoke Revolution	8	Music	Konami	75	Sep-03	ESPN NFL Football	9	Sports	Sega
78	Dec-03	kill.switch	6	Shooter	Namco	75	Sep-03	Freaky Flyers	5	Racing	Midway
78	Dec-03	Metal Arms: GITS	8	Action	Vivendi	75	Sep-03	Freestyle MetalX	7	Xtreme Sports	Midway
78	Dec-03	NBA Jam 2004	6	Sports	Acclaim	75	Sep-03	Hunter: The Reckoning Wayward	8	Action	Vivendi
78	Dec-03	NBA Live 2004	8	Sports	EA Sports	75	Sep-03	Indiana Jones & the Emperor's Tomb	8	Adventure	LucasArts
78	Dec-03	Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	10	Action	Sony CEA	75	Sep-03	The Italian job	5	Action	Eidos Int.
78	Dec-03	Roadkill	7	Car Combat	Midway	75	Sep-03	Madden NFL 2004	10	Sports	EA
78	Dec-03	Rogue Ops	6	Action	Kemco	75	Sep-03	NCAA 2004	10	Sports	EA Sports
78	Dec-03	SSX 3	10	Racing	EA Sports Big	75	Sep-03	Reel Fishing III	6	Sim	Natsume
78	Dec-03	Swat: Global Strike Force	8	Action	Vivendi	75	Sep-03	RTX Red Rock	5	Adventure	LucasArts
78	Dec-03	Time Crisis 3	9	Shooter	Namco	75	Sep-03	Silent Hill 3	7	Horror	Konami
78	Dec-03	WWE SmackDown! HCTP	9	Wrestling	THQ	75	Sep-03	Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	3	Sports	Acclaim

HIGH SCORES

These are the games that you've GOT to get your hands on!

Iss.	Month	Game name	Score	Genre	Publisher	Iss.	Month	Game name	Score	Genre	Publisher
78	Dec-03	Ratchet & Clank GC	10	Action	Sony CEA	79	Hol-03	Kya: Dark Lineage	9	Action	Atari
78	Dec-03	SSX 3	10	Racing	EA Sports Big	79	Hol-03	March Madness 2004	9	Sports	EA Sports
77	Nov-03	Jak II	10	Action	Sony CEA	79	Hol-03	Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun	9	FPS	EA Games
75	Sep-03	Madden NFL 2004	10	Sports	EA	78	Dec-03	Castlevania: LOI	9	Action	Konami
75	Sep-03	NCAA 2004	10	Sports	EA Sports	78	Dec-03	ESPN NBA Basketball	9	Sports	Sega
75	Sep-03	VF4: Evolution	10	Fighting	Sega	78	Dec-03	Time Crisis 3	9	Shooter	Namco
72	June-03	Midnight Club II	10	Racing	Rockstar	78	Dec-03	WWE SmackDown! HCTP	9	Wrestling	THQ
54	Jan-01	Final Fantasy X	10	RPG	Square	78	Dec-03	Warhammer 40,000: FW	9	FPS	THQ
52	Dec-01	MGS 2: Sons Of Liberty	10	Action	Konami	77	Nov-03	DDRMax 2	9	Dancing	Konami
52	Dec-01	Tony Hawk's pro Skater 3 (PS2)	10	Sports	Activision	77	Nov-03	ESPN NHL Hockey	9	Sports	Sega
51	Nov-01	Devil May Cry	10	Action	Capcom	77	Nov-03	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	9	Sports	EA
50	Oct-01	Madden NFL 2002 (PS2)	10	Sports	EA Sports	76	Oct-03	Buffy The Vampire Slayer	9	Action	Vivendi Univ.
47	July-01	Gran Turismo 3	10	Racing	Sony CEA	76	Oct-03	Soul Calibur II	9	Fighting	Namco
39	Nov-00	SSX (PS2)	10	Racing	Sony CEA	75	Sep-03	ESPN NFL Football	9	Sports	Sega
79	Hol-03	Beyond Good & Evil	9	Adventure	UbiSoft	74	Aug-03	Downhill Domination	9	Racing	Sony CEA

PS2 PREVIEW 2004

Nightshade ►

Sega's next big ninja game is right at the top of our "must-keep-an-eye-on-this" list. *Shinobi* had some great ideas behind it, but needed more work. Will *Nightshade* polish that potential into one of 2004's best action games?

PSM resolves to round up the year's most promising new games, pick the brains of the people making them, and unravel exactly what you can expect from the next 12 months in the life of PS2

What if you could see into the future? Well, you'd probably be either rich or locked up in some government lab with wires connected to your brain. But if you could see into the future of PlayStation 2, you'd know all about the awesome new games and surprises to expect in 2004 (and we'd want to hire you).

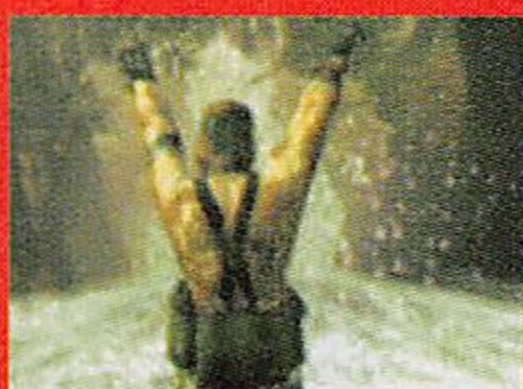
Unfortunately, while we've yet to find someone with these precognitive abilities (that's science speak for fortune telling), we have talked to the people behind 2004's biggest games, and used our backstage access to the industry to bring you the next best thing: the PSM PS2 Preview 2004. If it's worth knowing about — and knowledge is power, remember — you'll find it in the following pages.

Oh, and if any of you actually can peer into the future, Bill wants to know when the Raiders will finally win another Super Bowl. Thanks.

The Heavy Hitters

THE games to watch in 2004

Since there will be somewhere in the neighborhood of 12 million PS2 games released in 2004 (okay, more along the lines of 200) there will also be a lot of so-so software to wade through. Luckily, you have PSM to help. Get your calendar and a pen ready, because these are games you definitely won't want to miss.



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER
Release: Fall •
Publisher: Konami
There's no bigger game on the PS2 radar. Snake's — if it's even him — latest mission looks like it will set a new standard for PS2.



GRAN TURISMO 4
Release: Spring •
Publisher: Sony CEA
PS2's end-all, be-all racing game missed the holidays, but it should make some high-horsepower noise in the normally release-lite spring gaming season.



THE NEXT GRAND THEFT AUTO
Release: Fall? •
Publisher: Rockstar
We know there's a new *GTA* installment due this year, but that's about it — that, and rumors that Eminem will be somehow involved.



FINAL FANTASY XI
Release: March •
Publisher: Sony CEA
This is a biggie two-fold. First, it's the first time *Final Fantasy* has gone online. Second, it comes included with the PS2 Hard Disk Drive. We can't wait.



RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK
Release: Spring •
Publisher: Capcom
While a certain other system waits for *Resident Evil 4*, we're getting something better: a team-based *RE* you can play online.

THE FUTURE IS NOW!

Waaay back when, Sony talked about its future vision for PlayStation 2. It was going to support online play, have an enormous hard disk drive, let you download game updates, handle all your home entertainment, and pretty much do everything except read your mind (well, maybe that was in there, too — there was a lot to keep track of). Problem was, none of it happened. Until last year, when the Network Adapter launched and took some PS2 owners online — but it wasn't quite the grand, all-singing, all-dancing debut Sony had promised.

SONY DELIVERS

Things always change, however, and in PS2's case, that's a very good thing. Finally, now in 2004, the futuristic dream of a PS2 that can do just about anything is largely realized (or soon will be) and we've even gotten some extra special surprises, like the USB headset and the EyeToy camera.

2004 is going to be the year we see PS2 as the machine Sony truly envisioned it to be. A portion of systems are being sold with the Network Adapter (and, by year's end, all PS2s sold might be), meaning that the online community is slowly growing. After years of waiting, the PS2 Hard Disk Drive (HDD) is rolling out in March for \$99, with the massively-multiplayer online role-playing game

Final Fantasy XI pre-installed. With that, the PS2 will also gain new abilities: it will store and display your digital photos; you'll be able to download demos, new game levels, and other content from the Internet; entire games will even be installed to the HDD, so you won't have to pop in game discs.

PLAYSTATION 2 — AND A HALF

Not that all of the long-promised components are in place; we're going to see a totally new generation of PS2 games being made. Games that support all of these new technologies: online connectivity, hard disk storage, voice recognition, video chat, and high-definition video output. To a point, you might actually consider this new, tricked-out PS2 a sort of "PlayStation 2.5," and the games released by year's end will bear that out.

READY & SET FOR ON-THE-GO

Then there's the new blood: the PlayStation Portable, or PSP, as it will be called when it hits stores this holiday season. In development since before the PS2 was even a glimmer in PlayStation creator Ken Kutaragi's eye, the PSP isn't just Sony's first portable game system — it's one of the most powerful and versatile machines ever. Right now, developers are hard at work readying games for PSP, while, simultaneously, entertainment companies are planning movies and

music discs for it. Sony itself has nearly all of its in-house teams working on two PSP projects (not all intended as launch games), while its third parties are actually taking some games planned for PS2 and bringing them to PSP instead — it's that powerful.

We supposedly won't see PSP games until this year's Tokyo Game Show in September, but we should get a good idea of its power when the actual hardware is unveiled at E3 in May. Even developers are just taking their best guesses as to what the final machine will run like as we write this.

THE NEXT GENERATION

PS2's going strong, but 2004 will nevertheless be a year of transition. This year, all of the major developers will have — and start making games on — early PlayStation 3 hardware. Key first-party teams will also begin working on entirely new franchises for the system, handing off development responsibilities for future Sony-brand PS2 titles to outside developers. PS3 is out there, rough around the edges, but still powerful enough to get the game makers' creative juices flowing. Does this mean PS3 will cut PS2's lifespan short? Not at all — Sony's keen to get it in developers' hands early, so they stand a better chance of having some really killer games ready for its launch, which current looks to be set for 2005.

BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME?

Some high-profile sequels to some of our lowest scoring games are in the pipeline for this year — can they redeem their respective series?

Nightshade

This sequel to *Shinobi* features a sexy new female lead. That's nice, but we're hoping that it has much better level design and gameplay to go along with its prettier graphics.



Nightshade

we're guessing that the *DMC2* team won't be too heavily involved.

Tomb Raider

Talk about a wait not being worth it. Years (and lots of development dollars) passed between the announcement and

release of the last *Tomb Raider*, and the game ended up being one big stinker. Now that Crystal Dynamics (*Legacy of*

Kain: Defiance) is working on the series, we have higher (but still reserved) hopes for the next game.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

With the continued success of the TV series and good sales numbers for the game, there's sure to be a new *TMNT* on PS2 sooner rather than later. Konami really needs to go back to the drawing board, though, and create a game that has more to it than button-mashing.

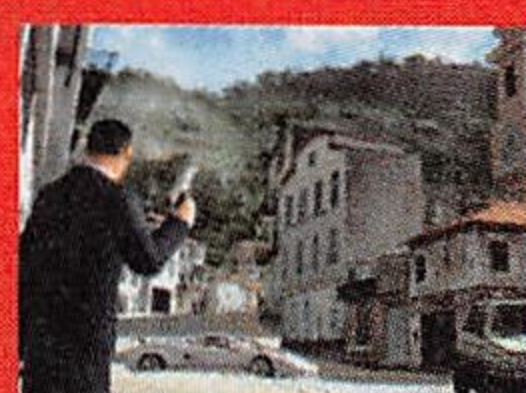
Ridge Racer

For what was supposed to be an evolution of Namco's racing heritage, *R: Racing Evolution* ended up being a pretty average game. Now there's a new *Ridge Racer* in the works, and we hope it brings the series' thrilling gameplay and awesome tracks back into the spotlight.



KINGDOM HEARTS II

Release: TBA • From: Square Enix
The sequel to Square's smash-hit Disney crossover was announced at the recent Tokyo Game Show, and it's already looking simply amazing.



DRIVER 3

Release: Summer • From: Atari
The original PlayStation "thug sim" finally debuts on PS2, with its sights fixed firmly on *Grand Theft Auto* and *True Crime: Streets of L.A.*



KILLZONE

Release: Fall • From: Sony CEA
Look for this stunning first-person shooter near year's end. If the early word holds true, it might be the best looking, best playing game of 2004.



ONIMUSHA 3

Release: Spring • From: Capcom
With a new fully 3D game world, time-travel plot, and a modern-day character with guns and a whip, this is looking to be the best game in the series.



X-MEN LEGENDS

Release: Summer • From: Activision
Developed by renowned PC game creator Raven Software, this innovative and promising game could give the RPG genre a needed kick in the pants.

The Hot List



PSP

Just like PS2 was in the fall of 2000, the PSP is going to be the must-have piece of gaming gear for the 2004 holiday season. It's like fitting a PS2 in your pocket, and the possibilities of that are staggering.



PS3

This year, Sony and many of its major third parties will begin development on PlayStation 3 launch games. Many already have, in fact, using extremely early hardware that only touches the surface of what PS3 can do.



HDD

We'll finally get our hands on this long-delayed add-on in March, with a free copy of *Final Fantasy XI* thrown in to sweeten the deal. Many other games will use the HDD for downloading bonus content, including *SOCOM II*.



ONLINE

You can expect nearly every major PS2 game this year to have some form of online support. Plus, extra game levels, demos, etc. are finally on the way.

CREAM OF THE

Metal Gear Solid 3



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Hideo Kojima Interview

PSM: While there are already a few potential 2004 "Game of the Year" contenders, for our money, Metal Gear Solid 3 has to be the front-runner. We sat down with the series' creator, famed game master Hideo Kojima, to get an update:

PSM: Metal Gear Solid 3 is our readers' most anticipated game of 2004. Why do you think that is? What is the key to hooking players so early on?

Hideo Kojima: It is an honor to be ranked Number 1. I accept this fact sincerely. Do I know why it is Number 1? No, but perhaps the concept of "survival" in MGS2 might have matched people's expectations for what they want in MGS3. Remember, though, it is also my duty to betray people's expectations in a good way.

PSM: What are the chances that you and Mr. Shinkawa might create a new action series centered on a new bad-ass character someday soon?

Kojima: It is possible. If the "Sons of MGS" would take the MGS series into their hands, it would happen. I have new ideas and concepts. If I could let go of MGS, it could happen tomorrow! Someone, please handle MGS4 for me!

PSM: Despite the fans' rampant speculation about MGS3's story details, is it safe to say that you've still got big surprises in store for people who think they've already figured out everything?

Kojima: There are surprises. MGS is a game of "I"s.

PSM: With MGS2, some fans complained that there was too much story. However, now that you've said that the story won't be as heavy in MGS3, fans seem to be worried that there won't be enough. Could you please say something to calm everyone down? :-)

Kojima: The story is definitely there. That is what makes the MGS series fun. The game has not lost any of its interesting storylines.

PSM: Looking into 2004 and beyond, game designers are getting a lot of new toys to play with: PSP, PS3, EyeToy, online play, the USB headset, Hard Drive, etc. What excites you, personally, as a game designer?

Kojima: I would like to work on the PSP. Wait, let me change my answer. I want a PSP. I would also like to work on the PS3 — to create an original title.

PSM: Heading into 2004, what do you feel are your biggest challenges as a game designer?

Kojima: The film, publishing, music and video game industries all face the same problem. A game does not sell just because it is a good game. New original titles do not sell. You have business-oriented, merchandising-dependent, market-driven creation...

Will I be able to introduce a new game in the 21st Century, when everything has gone Hollywood? If so, how? Everything is dependent on the "love" of the creator and the consumers — not the market.

PACKED WITH POTENTIAL

They might not have big names, but these lesser-known games just might surprise everyone

Maximo vs. Army of Zin

Release: January • From: Capcom

The first Maximo is still one of our favorite PS2 games, and its sequel appears to be improving in all the right areas (well, pretty much every area, to be more specific).

Maximo



Spy Fiction

Release: March • From: Sammy Studios

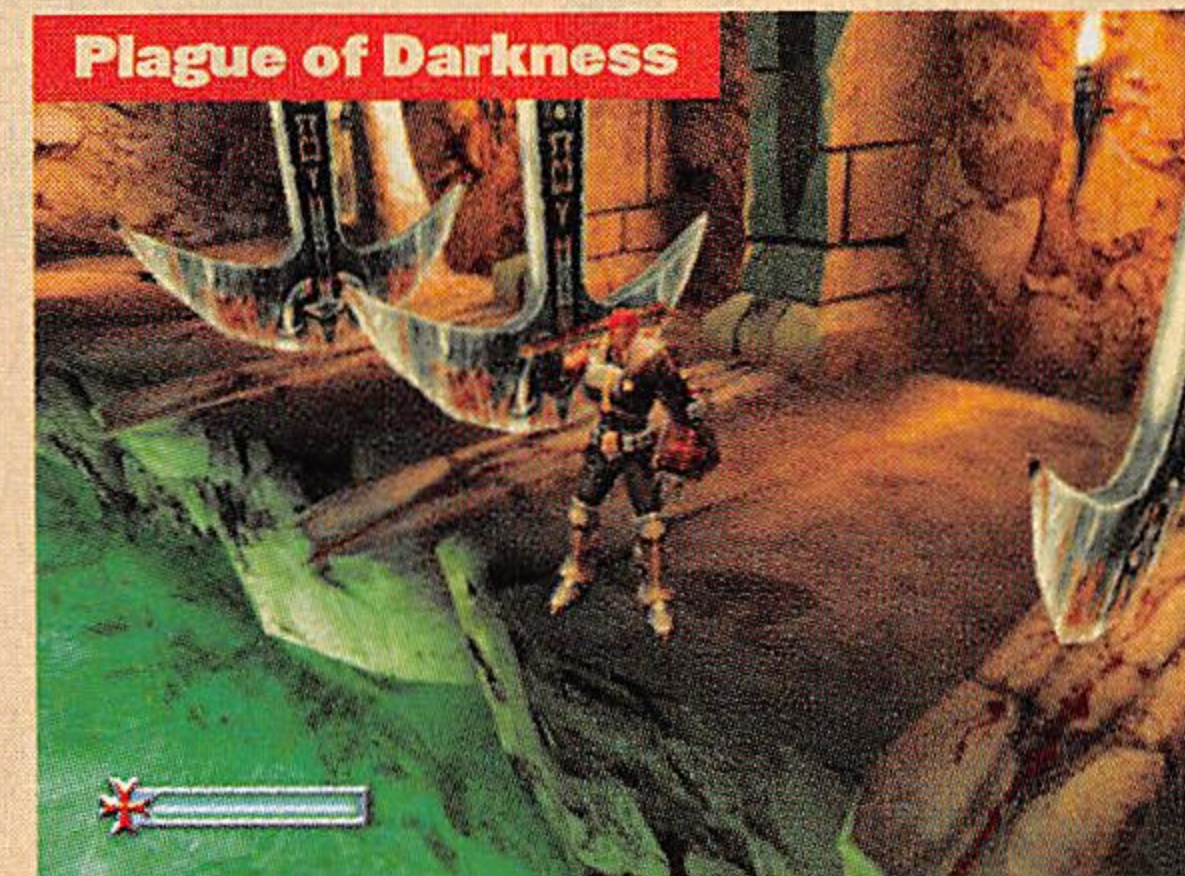
It might look like a Metal Gear rip-off at first glance, but this promising spy thriller promises some inventive gameplay, including optical disguises based on photos players take, and devices that enable the characters to cling to walls.

Plague of Darkness

Release: June • From: Namco

Namco's medieval action-adventure came out of nowhere and blindsided us with its promising graphics and gameplay. Developed in Europe, the game not only has a huge creep-out factor, but also solidifies Namco's mission to a) release more games and b) work with more outside developers.

Plague of Darkness



ECROP

RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK

Tsuyoshi Tanaka Interview

One of the year's biggest games is not that far away. Director Tsuyoshi Tanaka speaks with PSM about his creation.

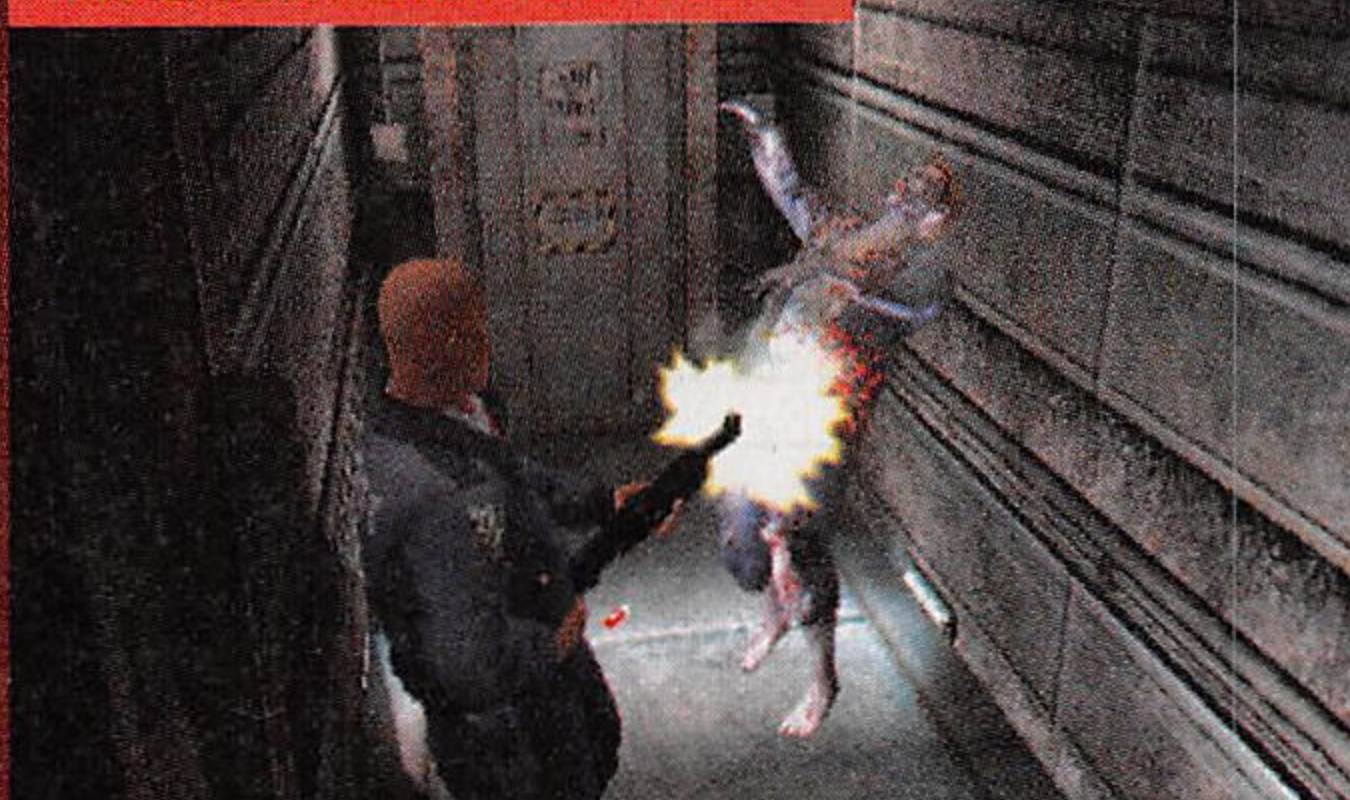
PSM: You're trying some new and exciting things with online, teamwork-based gameplay in *Resident Evil: Outbreak*. Do you think that we will see even more gameplay innovations in the future now that numerous people can play the same game together online?

Tsuyoshi Tanaka: Well, I think you will still see lots of new offline games due to bandwidth limitations, but there is no doubt that the online factor brings a new kind of thrill to games. But *Resident Evil: Outbreak* is different from *Doom*, the king of shooters, different from *Age of Empires*, the king of strategy, and different from *Ultima Online*, the king of online RPGs... It's a totally new type of game.

PSM: Do you think the *RE* series will return to its single-player roots on PS2 after this installment?

Tanaka: *RE* is a very established series; online play has not been tried before, so it is too early to make a decision about future online versions. Obviously, I hope *RE Outbreak* is a great success, which will allow us to consider making further installments.

Resident Evil: Outbreak



PSM: What will be the biggest challenge in keeping the *RE: Outbreak* experience "fresh" for gamers?

Tanaka: I would guess that you mean new online content when you ask this question, but this game wasn't developed with that kind of a system in mind. Actually this could be considered a company secret (laughs), but actually, I'd like you to imagine *Street Fighter 2* for a second. What makes that game fun isn't necessarily new content, it's who you are fighting against. If you play someone good, it's that much more challenging. The opponent, or rather the human factor, is what makes that game so great. Being able to beat all those different opponents is what makes the game so fun. *Outbreak* is no different. All I can say is play the game to experience the cool human factor that *Outbreak* brings to gaming.

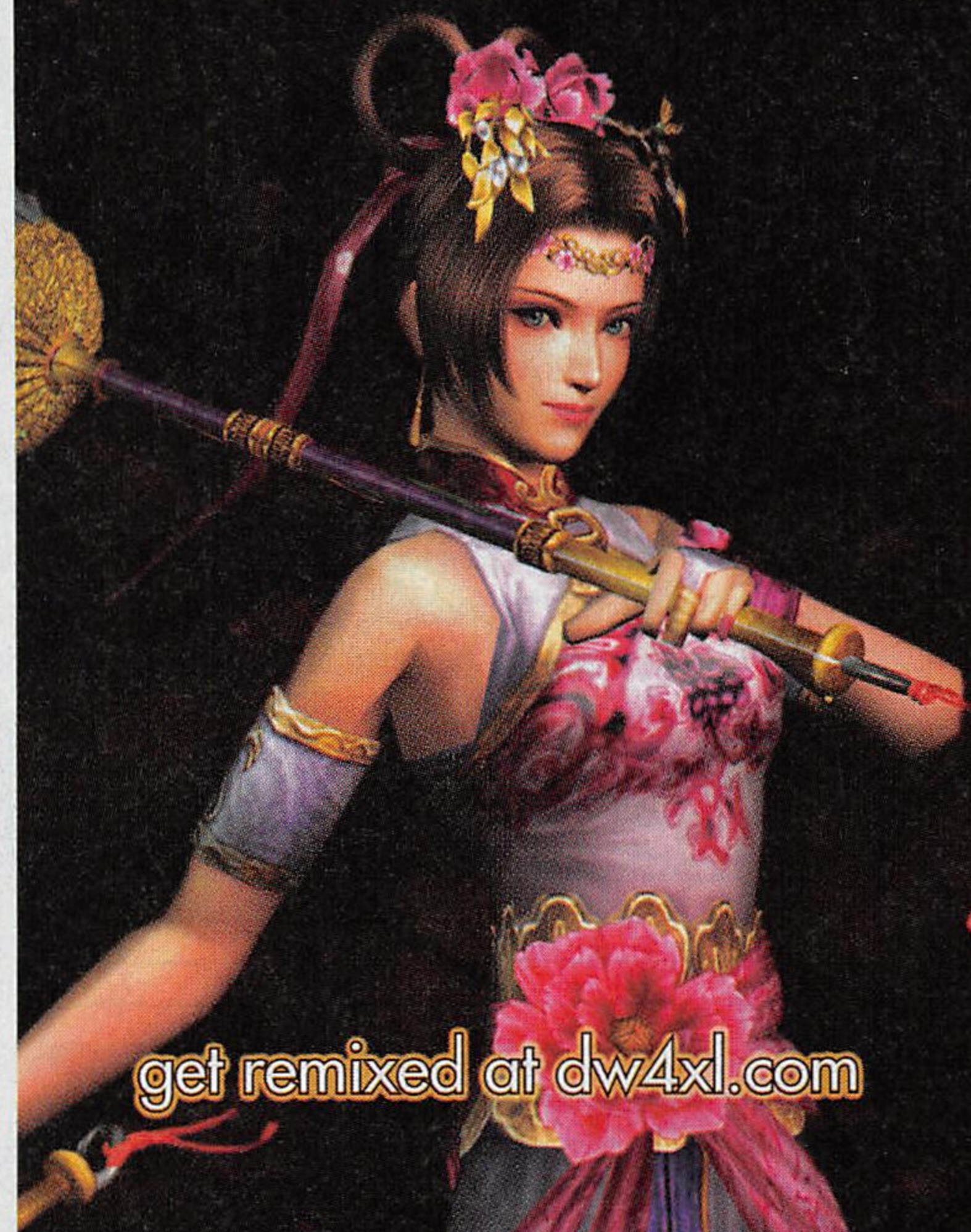
GRAN TURISMO 4

What can you say? GT4 is the sequel to one of the best-selling games ever, but it's not just a prettier version of GT3: A-Spec — not by a long shot. The game aims to redefine realism in the racing genre (creator Kazunori Yamauchi claims it can be used to train pro drivers) and will feature enough modern and classic cars (plus motorcycles) to make car nuts' heads explode (more than 400 at last count!). It's taking forever in development, but the wait will almost certainly be worth it.

Gran Turismo 4



PlayStation®2



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thanks!
25th
KOEI's 25th Anniversary

ASK THE GAME

This early on, we've got loads of questions about the year ahead, and very few answers. There's just no way to know for sure what 2004 holds in store for gamers. However — the first people to know anything about anything are the people who make the games, right? We took our questions to the Presidents and CEOs of every PlayStation 2 game publisher, and their responses were interesting to say the least...

Heading into 2004, how do you view the PlayStation 2 market?

Still gaining momentum	11%
Nearing its peak	34%
In the sweet spot	33%
Losing steam	22%

The vast majority of game publishers think that the PS2 is right near the height of its popularity. Expect the PS2 to definitely pass its peak this year, and slowly ramp down towards the launch of the PS3 in 2005 or 2006.

Will you probably publish more, less, or about the same number of PS2 titles in 2004 than you did in 2003?

More	50%
Less	25%
Same	25%

Although most publishers agree that PS2's upward momentum has slowed or stopped, we'll see more new games released in 2004 than ever before. Triple-A titles may begin to thin out though, as top development teams leave PS2 to begin work on PS3.

Roughly what portion of your games will likely be exclusive to PS2 in 2004?

All	25%
Most	37%
Some	13%
Few	0%
None	25%

62% of game publishers — well more than half — plan to release all or most of their upcoming titles for PS2 only. Sony's system has always enjoyed the most support from game makers, and it looks like that trend will only strengthen going forward.

Will your company probably focus more on original titles, or sequels?

Original	25%
Sequels	37%
About even	38%

These numbers are really close, so we should expect a good mix of titles. It is a little disappointing, though, that original games will make up the smallest group — videogaming could use more fresh new ideas.

Do you expect to see a PS2 price drop in 2004? If so, which price point will it most likely drop to?

Yes - Around \$150	33%
Yes - Around \$125	11%
Yes - Around \$99	56%
I don't think we'll see a price drop in 2004	0%

Wow, we didn't expect this — PlayStation 2 at \$99 in 2004? That would mean a \$79 price drop for the basic set (no Network Adapter). If this really happens, expect a frenzied new mass-market focus on our favorite system.

Do you expect to work on PS3 titles in 2004?

Yes	62%
No	25%
Undecided	13%

This is a key point — only 25% of PS2 publishers definitely won't be begin to develop PS3 games this year. Throughout 2004, as top development teams finish their current PS2 titles, expect them to graduate to the next generation.

When would you guess that Sony might begin to speak publicly about PlayStation 3?

Early 2004	11%
E3 (May)	56%
By the end of 2004	0%
Not before 2005	33%

Like everyone else, we're betting that Sony will at least touch on PS3 at May's E3, but there's a chance the company will want to keep the spotlight solely on the PSP unveiling. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

Are you confident that the PSP will really ship in the U.S. by the end of 2004?

Yes	89%
No	11%

Sony won't unveil the PSP until May, and the first games won't be shown until Fall — and the handheld is supposed to ship in time for the Holiday season? That's cutting it close, but the publishers have faith.

If you had to guess, what do you imagine PSP's price point might be?

\$100	22%
\$150	34%
\$200	22%
\$250	22%
\$300 or higher	0%

Again, we're talking to Presidents and CEOs, here — has Sony actually told some of these guys what the price will be? There's no overwhelming winner here, but the \$150 mark gets the nod. From the rumors we've heard, we agree.

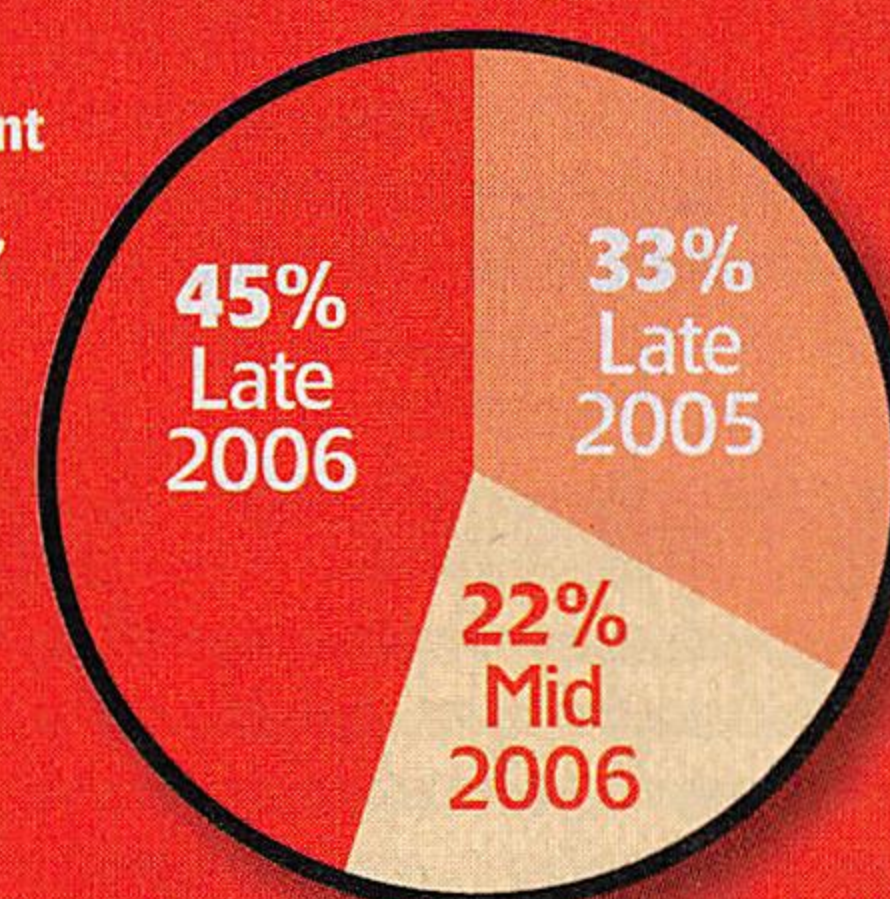
Assuming the PSP releases on time, will you publish PSP titles at launch or by the end of 2004?

Going by these numbers, the PSP should have a healthy launch lineup. Nearly half of the those polled are still on the fence though, and if they want a game out before 2005, they'll have to make up their minds and get started pretty soon.

If you had to guess, when do you think the PlayStation 3 might release in the U.S.?

When we posed this question, we had to wonder — how many of these guys actually know the real date? While 45% say we won't see the system until late 2006, a combined 55% say we'll see it sooner. Our guess is still late 2005.

[Zero percent responded "Mid-2005" or "2007 or later"]



Which of the following options best reflects your company's estimated hand-held focus in 2004 and beyond?

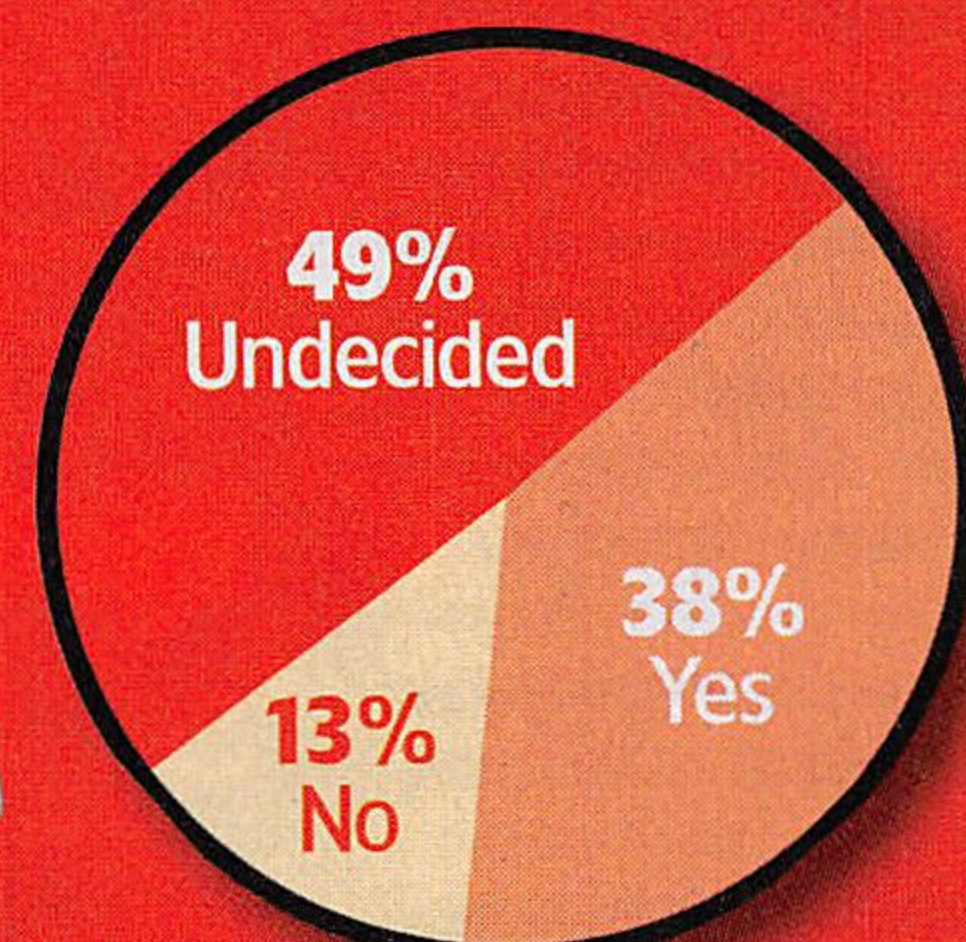
100% Game Boy / 0% PSP	13%
75% Game Boy / 25% PSP	37%
50% Game Boy / 50% PSP	13%
25% Game Boy / 75% PSP	13%
0% Game Boy / 100% PSP	24%

This isn't really a fair question, because these guys have always made good money on Game Boy, and PSP is still an unknown factor. Still though, publishers seem to put a lot of faith in Sony — Nintendo had better be ready.

Do you plan to support Sony's EyeToy peripheral in 2004?

Yes	0%
No	50%
Undecided	50%

Yikes, EyeToy is sure getting a lukewarm reception from the development community. We really like the nutty little doodad, but there hasn't been a single new game announced for it. It has too much potential to wind up in the closet.



MAKERS

How do you view EyeToy?

Revolutionary, major long-term potential	0%
Nice gimmick, will fizzle out quickly	44%
We'll have to wait and see	56%

Again, developers seem to have learned their lesson from "gimmick" peripherals in the past. If Sony is going to cement their new toy as an important part of PS2 gaming long-term, it looks like they'll have to carry it forward themselves.

Do you plan to support the Hard Disk Drive (HDD) in some form during 2004?

Yes	50%
No	25%
Undecided	25%

These numbers are pretty favorable towards the HDD, considering that the peripheral will debut so late in PS2's lifecycle. But will most games' HDD "support" be simple game save options, or something more ambitious?

Do you plan to support the USB headset in 2004?

Yes	38%
No	49%
Undecided	13%

We'd hoped for more headset support since it's such an easy thing for a developer to put into a game, but oh well. We'll continue to chatter away at *SOCOM II* and *Manhunt* in between new headset-compatible releases.

How would you describe the importance of online gaming in 2004?

Key to the continued success of industry	22%
A growing, but still niche, audience	67%
Online gaming is vastly overrated	11%

For now, online is what it is — a fun but tricky new avenue to explore. Online PS2 gaming will continue to grow, slowly, but don't expect a big online gaming "boom" before the PS3 comes along.

Which of these online fee models do you find the most attractive?

Free online play	13%
Pay-Per Download	49%
Monthly Subscription	38%

Nearly half of our respondents are eyeing pay-per-download business models, but that might not ever be a viable plan this generation. PS2 owners would need a Network Adapter, HDD, and a broadband connection to buy anything meaningful.

In 2004, roughly how many of your titles will feature online functionality?

All	0%
Most	13%
Some	62%
Few	25%
None	0%

Roughly three-quarters plan to put forth a meaningful amount of online content, which is a very exciting thing to hear if you're addicted to playing over the net. By the end of 2004, online gaming should really begin to reach the mainstream.

Next generation, Microsoft will likely...

Catch up to Sony	0%
Begin to close the gap	78%
Stay where they are	22%
Lose more ground	0%
Get out of the market	0%

Publishers are showing a surprising amount of respect for Microsoft, considering the beating PS2 has handed Xbox. Although no one believes Xbox 2 will actually catch up to PS3, they're betting on a closer, more competitive race.

Next generation, Nintendo will likely...

Catch up to Sony	0%
Begin to close the gap	13%
Stay where they are	25%
Lose more ground	62%
Get out of the market	0%

This is sobering for old-school Nintendo fans — 87% don't believe Nintendo will do any better against Sony next generation than they did this time. If it weren't for Xbox's dismal sales in Japan, Nintendo would be third worldwide... What happened?

Which problem do you think poses the biggest threat to gaming?

Escalating development costs	62%
Lack of innovation	38%
Competition from other entertainment	0%
Public perceptions about games	0%

That's the dark side to better-looking, more in-depth games — they cost a hell of a lot more to make than the simpler games of years past. Game makers have to find ways to bring costs down to keep our industry healthy and thriving.

How do you view the Hard Disk Drive?

It seems as if publishers are saying "we're not really excited about the HDD, but it's easy enough to put simple HDD features into games." What's needed is an innovative game that really takes advantage of the peripheral in cool ways.

22%
Should
extend
PS2's
lifespan

11%
Not
sure

67%
Won't
make
significant
impact



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PSM PREDICTS

So you've read what the industry bigwigs think will go down in 2004 — now it's our turn to peer into the crystal ball

- PS2's price drops to \$129 by next September, but we won't see a drop to \$99 until 2005.
- When the price for the core PS2 system drops, the online bundle will still stay at \$199, but will include the HDD, as well.
- While support for the HDD will initially be slow, over 20 games will utilize it before year's end.
- Capcom will announce that a version of *Resident Evil 4* will appear on PS2 after an initial exclusivity period on GameCube. *RE5* will also be announced for PS2, but with a late 2005 release date.



- In an effort to ramp up and prepare for the PS3's launch, many companies will cut back on Xbox and GameCube titles. The number of PS2 titles will also drop when compared to last year.
- Rockstar will announce that the next *GTA* will feature an online mode and will support the HDD and the headset. They will also announce that one last PS2 *GTA* title will be released in 2005, but that it will be more of an expansion to the previous game.

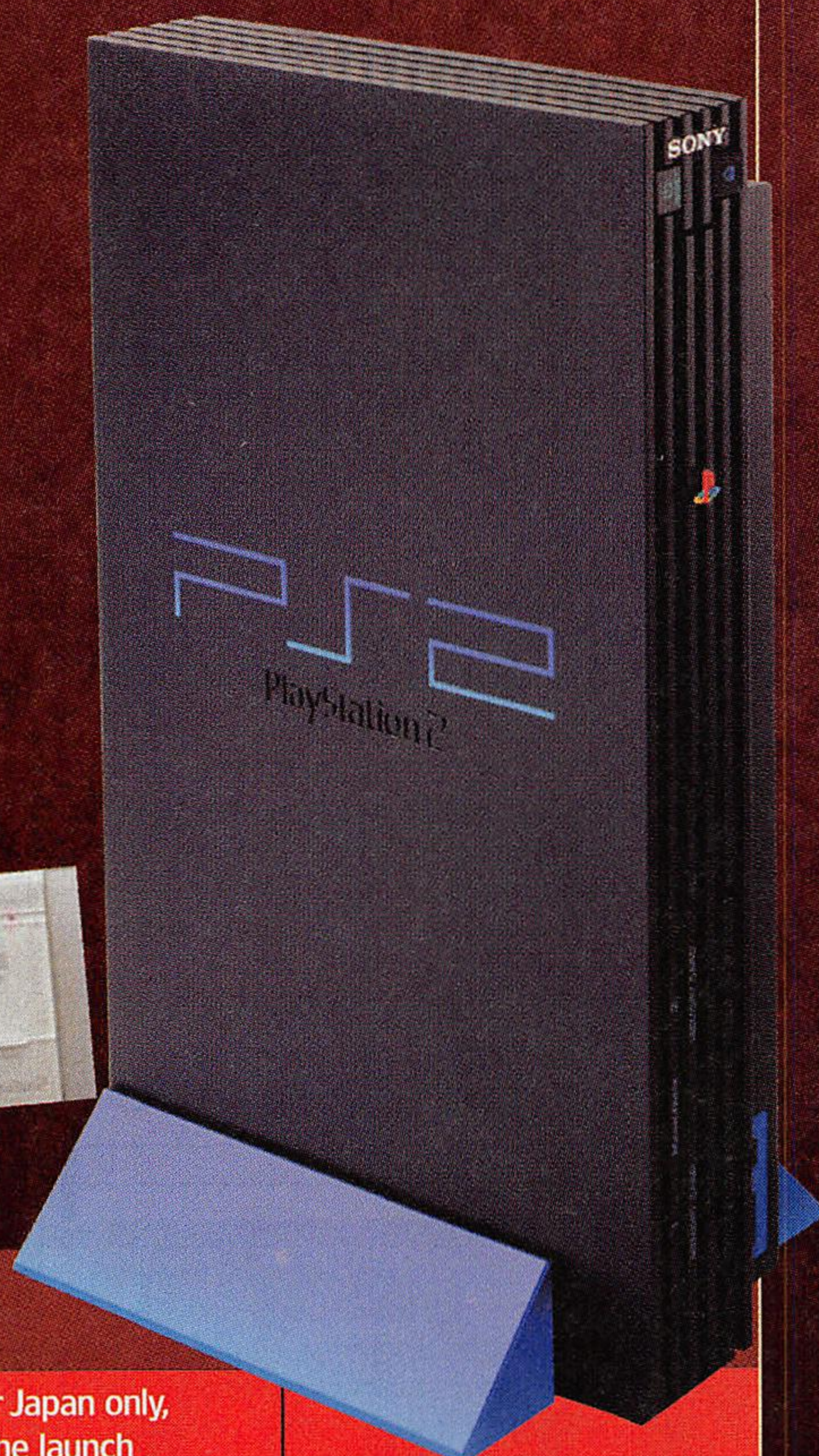
- The PSP will sell over one million units during its first few days of worldwide availability, making it the most successful console launch in history.
- Along with versions of *SOCOM* and *The Getaway*, virtually every major Sony franchise will appear on the PSP within the first few months it going on sale.



- Sony will announce plans for an online store, where PS2 owners can purchase and download songs and movies via their PS2s.
- With the success of the PSX, Sony will release a add-on for the PS2 that works with the HDD and allows gamers to record their favorite TV shows, just like TiVo.



- Sony will finally unveil an official wireless controller for the PS2 that still retains the force feedback feature.
- In a rather large coup, Sony will announce that virtually all of EA's 2004 releases will once again be only online on PS2.
- While the focus at E3 will definitely be on PS2 and PSP, several developers will already be ready to show initial PS3 game demos.



PS2 in 2004 at a Glance

Timeline:

MARCH

- Launch of PS2 HDD
- Bundled with *Final Fantasy XI* and one free month of Square Enix's PlayOnline service for \$99.99
- Capcom releases *Resident Evil: Outbreak*

SPRING

- *Gran Turismo 4* releases

MAY

- E3 takes place in LA
- PSP hardware unveiled (We'll get to see working hardware — but supposedly no actual games, though we're betting that will change between now and May.)
- Possible first glimpse at PlayStation 3 (Developers are telling us that there are tentative

plans to have at least some sort of PS3 "teaser" at the show.)

SEPTEMBER

- PSM mega-event
- Should we really say anything? Nah — make 'em sweat!
- Tokyo Game Show
- First PSP games shown (Still not determined: whether these will be

games for Japan only, or all of the launch titles, since PSP is supposed to release simultaneously world-wide.)

FALL

- PSX goes on sale in the United States
- *Metal Gear Solid 3* releases

NOVEMBER

- PSP launches worldwide
- Can Sony really pull this off? Probably, but we wouldn't rule out hardware shortages a la the PS2 launch.

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CONTENTS

- 78 Alias
- 80 All Star Baseball 2004
- 64 The Bard's Tale
- 62 Dead To Rights II



- 58 DRIV3R
- 68 Legends Of Wrestling
- 76 Leisure Suit Larry
- 80 Megaman X7
- 76 NBA Ballers
- 82 NFL Street



- 70 The Plague of Darkness
- 72 Splinter Cell P.T.
- 76 The Suffering
- 74 Syphon Filter O.S.

HOT GAMES

Don't waste a second; turn on over to these big games NOW!



▲ The Bard's Tale pg. 64



▲ Splinter Cell P.T. pg. 72



▲ Alias pg. 78



▲▲ *DRIV3R* is full of all sorts of hard-nosed heavies, from the lovely Calita and the brutal Jericho to the player character: a deep-cover cop named Tanner.

DRIV3R

GAME INFO / PUB ATARI / DEV REFLECTIONS / REL DATE PENDING / TYPE ACTION / MAX PLAYERS ONE / ESRB RATING PENDING

Don't say it. As tempting as it is to take one look at *DRIV3R* and say "Oh, it's just a *GTA* knockoff," just hold your tongue. First off, this series began clear back in 1999, so it's been a serious player longer than *GTA*, which didn't really hit its stride until the PS2 arrived. Secondly, *DRIV3R* is doing a few things better than Rockstar's flagship series does. This is its own game, doing its own thing, and it's looking fantastic.

<< DRIV3R IS DOING A FEW THINGS BETTER THAN ROCKSTAR'S FLAGSHIP SERIES DOES >>

First, let's refresh what we already know about *DRIV3R*. It used to be called *Driver 3*, and if we're speaking aloud instead of typing, it still will be. The setting is a sort of pseudo-1970s setting, the roads are ruled by muscle cars that handle well, take realistic damage, and look remarkably similar to real-world hot rods, and the main character is still undercover cop Tanner, one guy you would not want to meet in a dark alley.

Driving Gloves vs. Running Shoes

One new element of gameplay is out-of-the-car missions, in which Tanner grabs a Mac-10, a grenade launcher, or some other death-dealing device and sprays fools like Tommy Vercetti, imitating the "little friend" scene in *Scarface*. However, *DRIV3R* hasn't abandoned its roots, and Tanner still spends tons of time behind the wheel of one of around 70 cars, motorcycles, or even powerboats, tearing up the streets just like the best Hollywood-style car chases. Many of the ideas that Reflections pioneered for *Stuntman* return here, but have been heavily refined and improved.

For starters, the driving model is similar, but the gameplay is far more forgiving (and for that matter, just plain more fun) than in *Stuntman*. Plus, most of the world around you is destructible and the impressively realistic physics engine has been enhanced. Thus, when you misjudge a powerslide around a corner and go plowing up the sidewalk, you'll send tables, chairs, light poles, and more flying all about you, but you won't come to a jarring halt. It looks fantastic, too.

Drive-by Movies

Reflections hasn't quite gotten the Hollywood bug out of its system, which results in two interesting game elements. One is Director Mode, which



▲ Tanner's undercover work takes him from Miami to Nice, France and on to Istanbul, Turkey.

enables you to edit together clips of your performance to create the ultimate highlight reel. But even more interesting to us is "Thrill Cam", which is basically very similar to *Matrix*-style bullet time, but applied to car chases. By pressing down on both shoulder buttons simultaneously, you slow down the action and switch to a more cinematic, external camera. You retain control of your vehicle, and the harder

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

► The Thrill Cam makes things slower and cooler-looking, but it won't make outrunning a 'Vette clone with a taxi any easier.



▲ For the last time, Earl, you are not Boss Hogg, and I am not Daisy Duke! Now stop humming that banjo music!

Just like in the movies

The storyline and cut scenes in *DRIV3R* are straight from Hollywood's book. The plotline involves Tanner taking down a ring of car thieves, and starts such shady types as the cold-blooded Jericho and the similarly threatening — but much more attractive — Calita. Granted, *DRIV3R* isn't quite as much of a movie as *The Getaway* was, but with 46 minutes of cutscenes, it's not far behind.

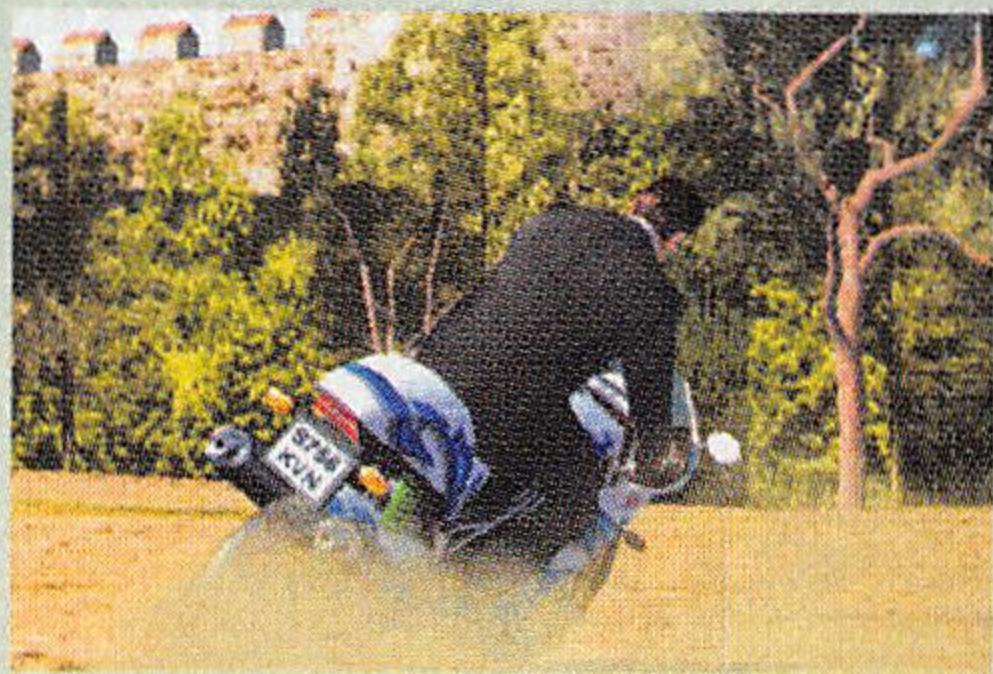


▲ This being the pseudo-'70s, the cars tend to be big and powerful, and often resemble Mustangs, Trans-Ams, and Lamborghinis.

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE
you press the buttons, the more you can slow things down. This not only looks awesome, it also impacts gameplay, giving you a leg up when things get really hairy.

DRIV3R admittedly boasts many elements in common with several other games: *GTA 3*, *The Getaway*, even *True Crime*. However, none of these games had this driving model or this road design. *DRIV3R* looks ready to deliver some real thrills.

ERIC BRATCHER



▲ The bikes all obey the game's high-end physics engine as well, so you can do wheelies, stoppies, or just donuts — sissy.



▲ There's plenty of real estate to explore, as this semi-textured wireframe of Miami shows.



▲ Jake later regretted promising to do "whatever it takes" to get his fare to the post office before it closed.



▲ There are roughly 70 vehicles in the game, including cars, semi tractor-trailers, motorcycles, and powerboats.

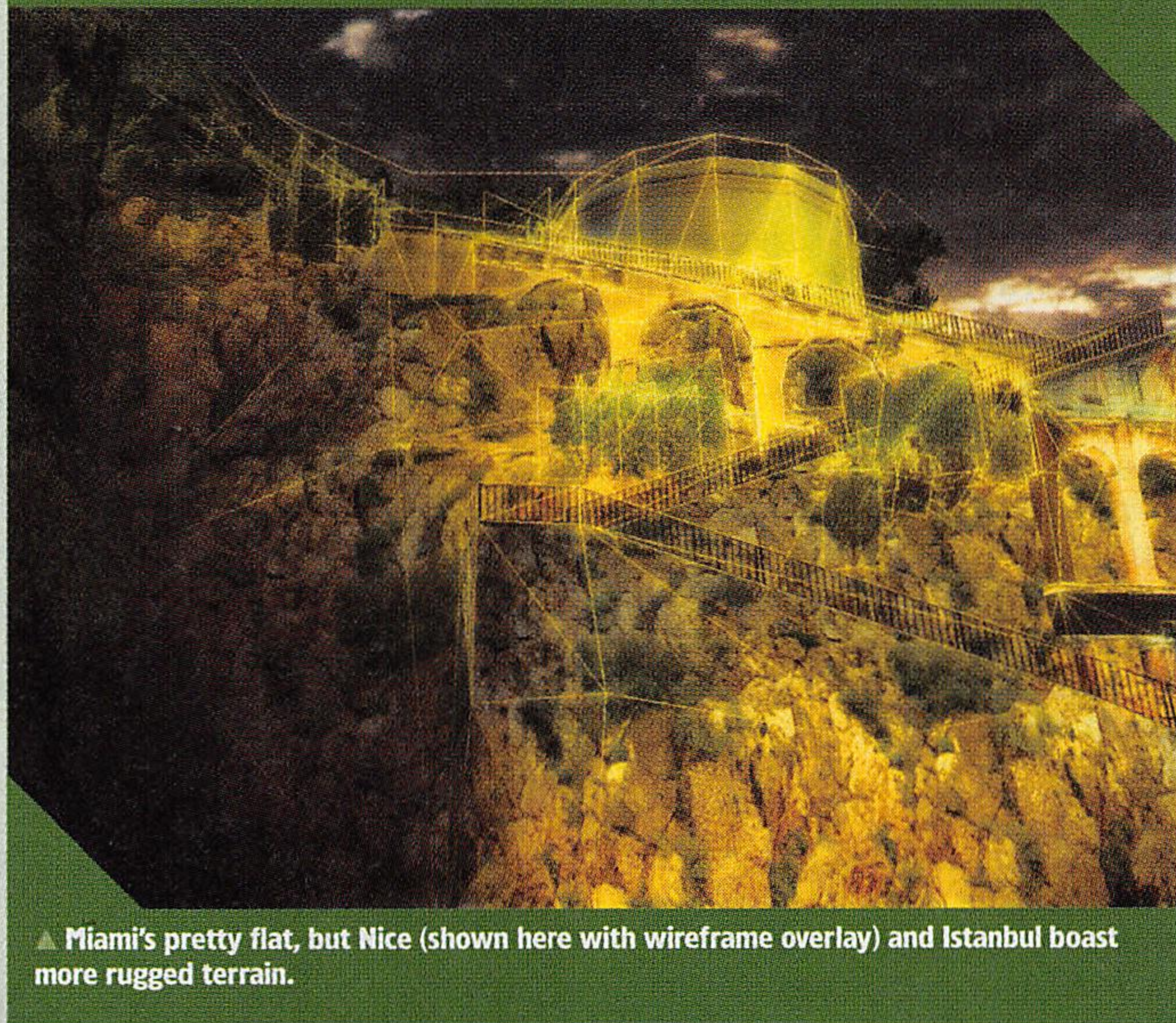


▲ You can't drive a train in the game, but if you aren't careful, you can wear one.

THE BUZZ
The on-foot missions of *GTA* mixed with *Burnout 2*'s physics engine and great graphics.

Long And Winding Roads

In recreating the streets of Miami, Nice, and Istanbul, Reflections developed special technology that enabled them to fine-tune not only the curves of each road, but also its slope and camber. You'll see twisting, rising, falling, and even banked roads. Get ready!



▲ Miami's pretty flat, but Nice (shown here with wireframe overlay) and Istanbul boast more rugged terrain.

<< DRIV3R LOOKS READY TO
DELIVER SOME REAL THRILLS >>

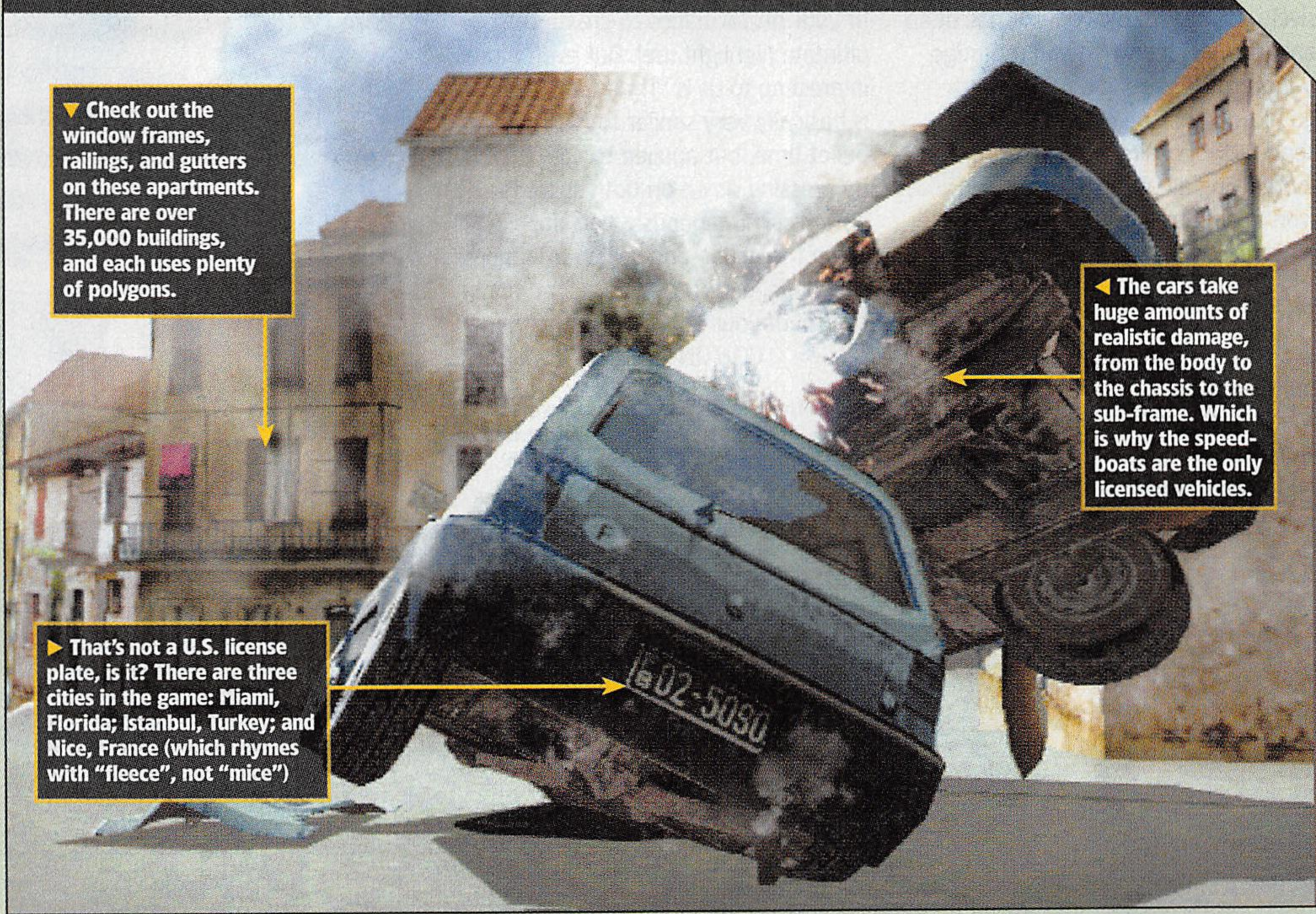
PSM BREAKDOWN

An up-close look at the game in action

▼ Check out the window frames, railings, and gutters on these apartments. There are over 35,000 buildings, and each uses plenty of polygons.

► That's not a U.S. license plate, is it? There are three cities in the game: Miami, Florida; Istanbul, Turkey; and Nice, France (which rhymes with "fleece", not "mice")

◀ The cars take huge amounts of realistic damage, from the body to the chassis to the sub-frame. Which is why the speedboats are the only licensed vehicles.



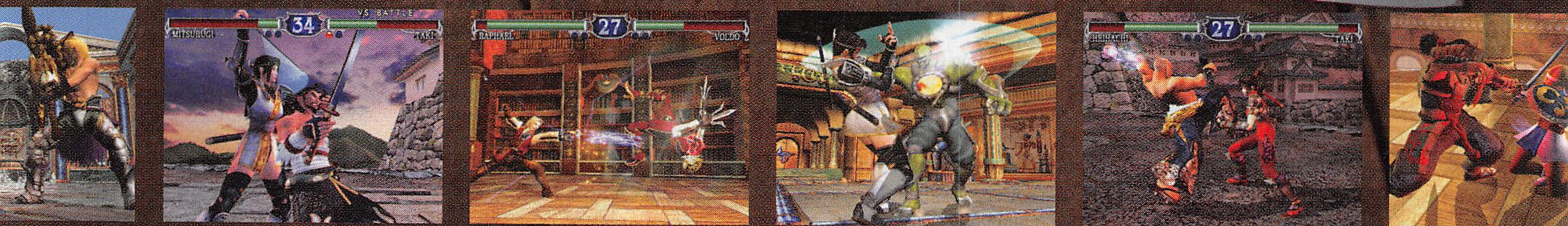
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Suggestive Themes

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▼ A Hong Kong style action game wouldn't be complete without a ninja, would it? We wonder if Shinobi would even stand a chance.

GAME INFO

PUB NAMCO HOMETEK

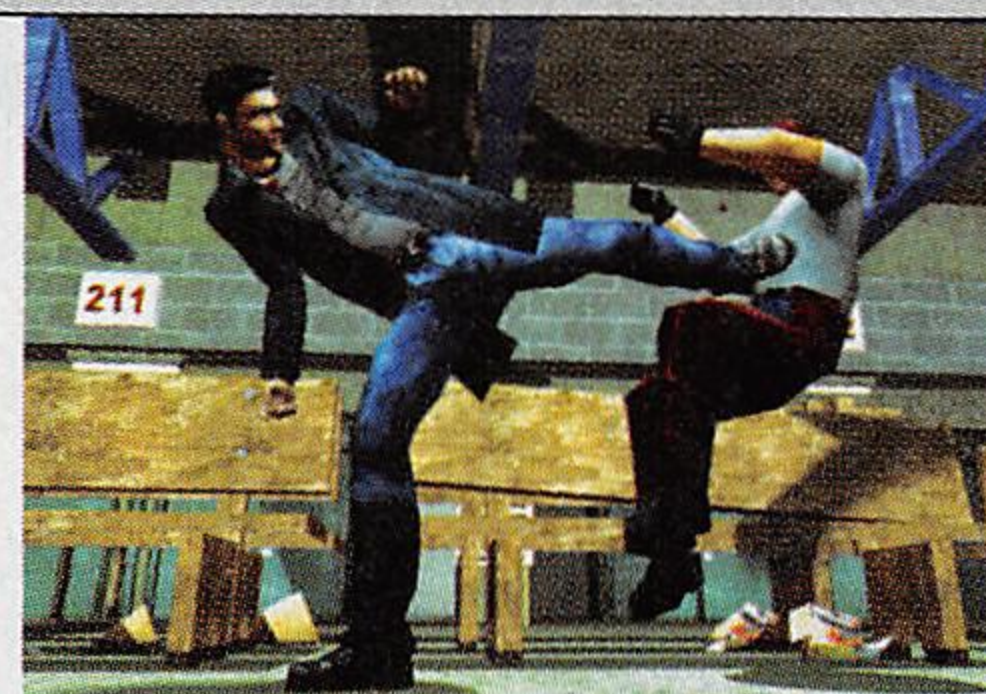
DEV NAMCO HOMETEK

TYPE ACTION

REL DATE FALL 2004

MAX PLAYERS ONE

ESRB PENDING



▲ Even if you don't have a gun, you can still take out guys the old fashioned way.

DEAD TO RIGHTS II: HELL TO PAY

The continuing tale of a man and his dog

Not Quite Semaphore

Hell to Pay is already more spectacular than the original, mainly due to the way that both Jack and NPCs can interact with objects in the environment.



▲ Note the Confederate Flag and swimsuit calendar on the back wall... just part of the scenery, right?



▲ Wrong. Once the flag becomes ablaze it becomes a lethal weapon for whoever reaches it first.

The original *Dead to Rights* scored fairly well given PSM's strict criteria for a good action game, and it's looking as though Namco

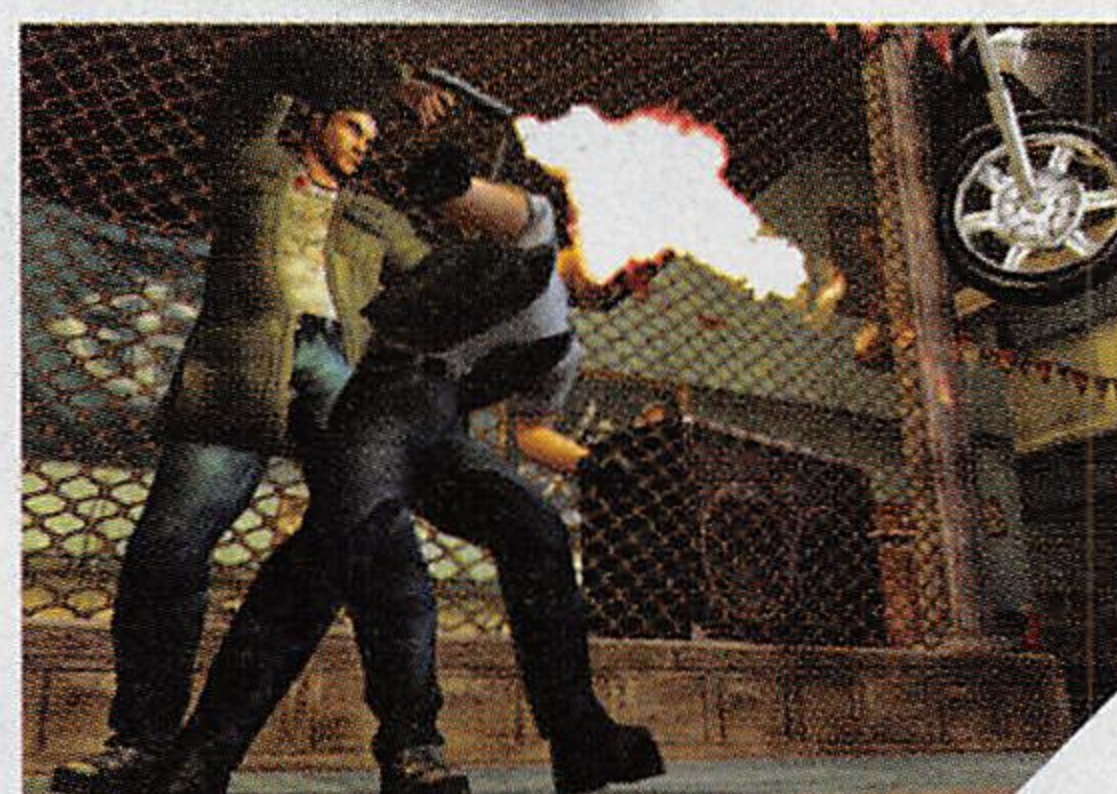
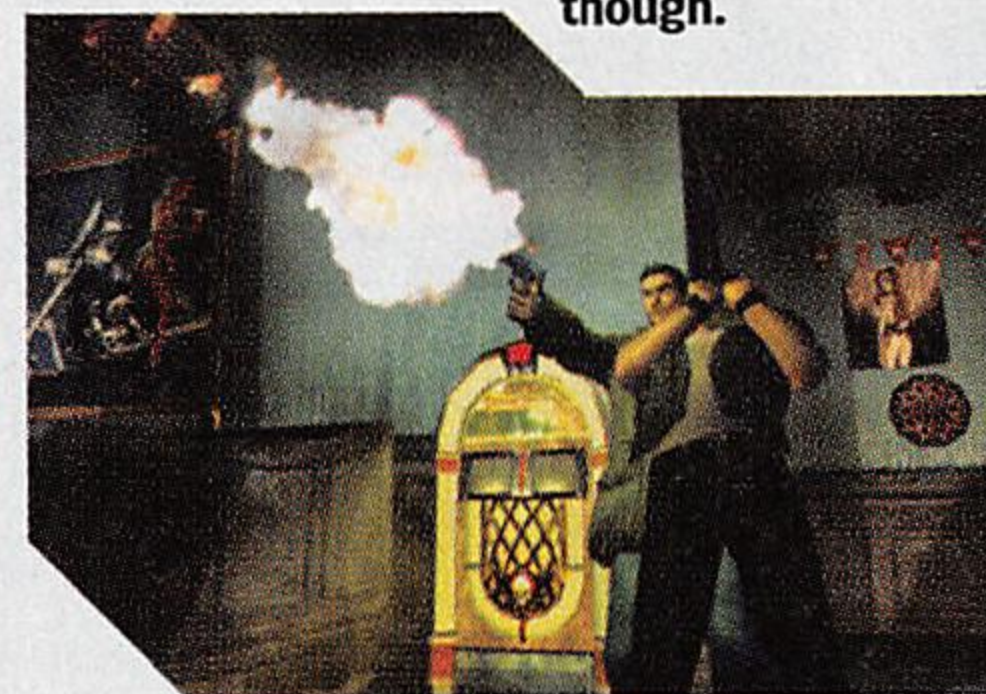
is out for a better grade the second time around. *Dead to Rights: Hell to Pay* again puts players in the role of lethal cop Jack Slate. Much like the first title, *Hell to Pay* focuses on shooting first and not even bothering with questions. Namco is describing the sequel as a Hong Kong style "action noir" title, so we can expect acrobatic gunplay, realistic martial arts and K-9 sidekick Shadow chowing down on enemies when the going gets rough.

New to the game is a 360-degree fighting system, which lets Jack destroy incoming opponents from every direction. Namco has apparently taken a few classes from the *Soul Calibur* design team and included running and ground attacks, moves that can be charged for additional damage, and a dynamic blocking system. There's even a new dynamic diving system that lets Jack adjust his positioning in midair to target any opponent on-screen.

To further immerse Jack in a world where victory comes from offensive innovation as much as technique, players can now grab a huge array of melee weaponry: bats, pipes, floor lamps, microphone stands, two-by-fours, and even chainsaws. Making matters even more interesting is a new environmental interaction system that lets him roll over tables and other obstacles without breaking stride. Jack can even climb certain objects just to gain added height for slow-motion gun dives.

Namco has just under a year to polish up their bad boy for the autumn, so check back for an updated preview as the release date approaches. **DOUG TRUEMAN**

▼ Like in the first *DTR*, Jack can temporarily replace his own lifebar by grabbing a human shield. They don't normally last that long, though.



▲ *Hell to Pay* elaborates on the first game's brutal execution style kills, but they come at a price and need to be unlocked by displaying finesse instead of mere button mashing.

THE BUZZ

This game looks hot. We can't wait to see Jack's new moves and attacks.



▲ The Beer Barn goes up in smoke as Jack roasts a few Hogs for dinner. Flamethrower... there is no substitute.

AND SO I SHALL NAME HER AURA
WITHOUT YOU SHE WOULD NOT EXIST
THE SHINING GIRL AURA
WE WILL ENTRUST HER WITH OUR WILL
OUR FUTURE IS IN HER HANDS

SHE IS OUR
I MUST

SPEAK WITH MORGANNA

TO GO WHERE SHE IS

THE LIVING FLESH POSES A HINDRANCE

BUT I MUST

I MUST GO FOR OUR AURA

EMMA PLEASE GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE

COURAGE

NO THE PASSAGE OF TIME

IS IRREVERSIBLE

BIRTH OR DEATH

NOW ONLY THESE TWO

CHOICES REMAIN

AURA THE CHILD OF LIGHT

EMMA'S DAUGHTER

MY DAUGHTER

JUST A LITTLE MORE

TRAVELER TAKE THIS TO HEART

IT IS DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN

絶対包囲 hack Part 4 QUARANTINE™

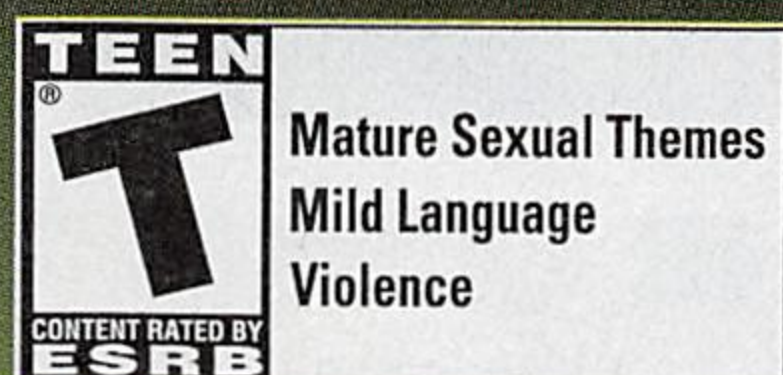
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After surviving parts 1, 2 and 3 of the .hack saga, the end is in sight for Kite and friends. But the clock is ticking, the bracelet is gone and still the virus is raging. Player by player, the world is falling apart. Now they must cure this virus or watch their friends fade away — how will it end? It's up to you.



.hack has spread beyond video games. Also look for DVDs, trading cards, strategy guides and now Manga comics! .hack//Legend of the Twilight available now from TOKYOPOP®.



As seen on
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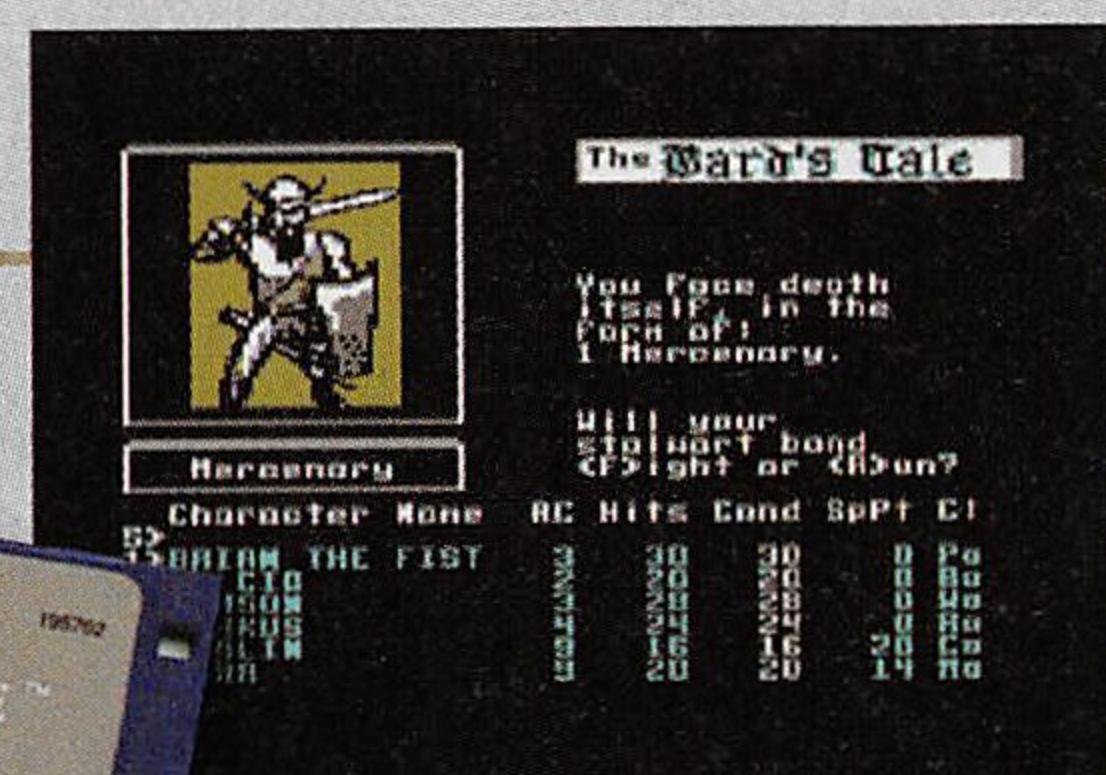
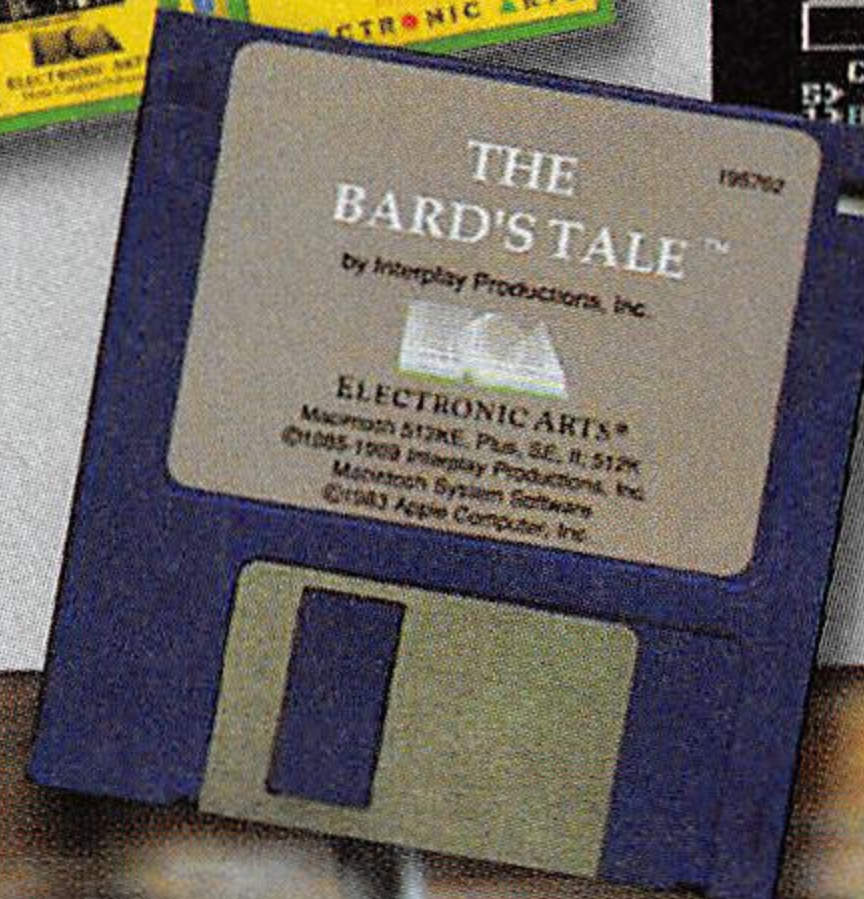


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A Little History

While many of you probably wouldn't have ever heard of the series, there was definitely a time when computer users cherished its name. From its humble beginnings way back in 1985, the series went on to inspire two sequels and a rather unique "construction set." Now, almost 20 years later, the person who originally produced the first game and founded Interplay, Brian Fargo, has revived the series... and in a big way. Pulling talent from all over the industry and funding practically everything on his own dime, Brian created inXile Entertainment, determined to make an impact on the industry and the RPG world once again.



**ONLY IN
PSM
NEW SCREENS**

GAME INFO

PUB INXILE

DEV INXILE

TYPE ACTION/RPG

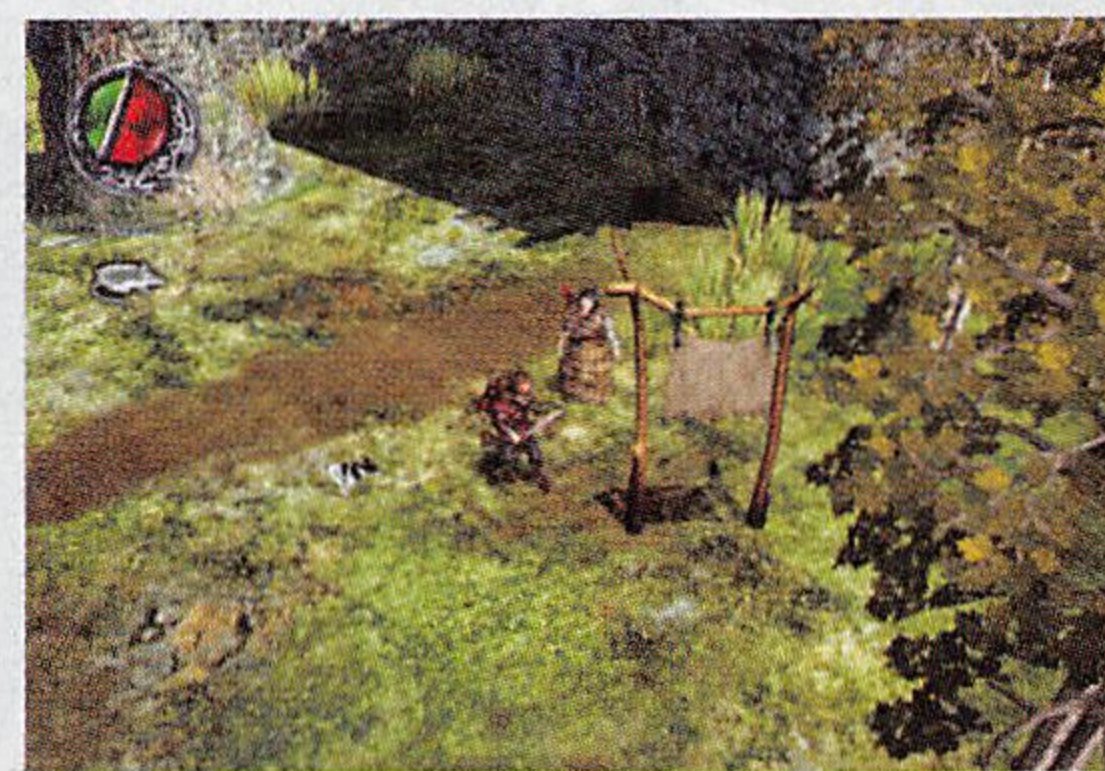
REL DATE WINTER

MAX PLAYERS ONE

ESRB RATING PENDING

► Despite the funny factor, there's no denying that there's still plenty of adrenaline-pumping action in this game. Enemies, for some reason, really like to attack in packs.

The BARD'S TALE



▲ The amount of detail in these environments is impressive, yet the framerate is top-notch.



▲ The snowy peaks of the mountains provide plenty of challenges for even the most skilled adventurers.

At first glance, the new *Bards Tale* shares a lot in common with several of the other big action RPGs out there. From the non-stop combat to the similar camera angles and streamlined inventory systems, there's no doubt that it's been influenced a lot by such modern titles as *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* and *Dungeons & Dragons: Heroes*. However, wander past the game's surface and you'll quickly notice that a lot of the

established rules, expectations and clichés of the genre have been completely thrown out the window. This is a game designed to rock the very foundations of what action RPG fans are generally used to and that's exactly what excites us most about the project.

Wanting to spend as much time on the actual game itself and not necessarily the technology behind it, the team members at inXile decided to utilize an already existing engine for the new *Bard's Tale*. However, with so many possibilities out there, what engine would be the right one for them? Considering how much they "loved what was done

in *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*", the answer seemed clear. The Snowblind engine would be used, but it would definitely have to be upgraded if the team's high ambitions were to be met. So, over the last year, refinements and tweaks were made and the end result is going to be impressive. With a year left in its development cycle, *Bard's Tale* already managed to wow us with its intricate and beautifully rendered lighting effects, as well as its highly detailed environments and character designs. At least right now, there is no other game in the genre that looks remotely as good.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



▲ Equipping the flail is great when you're surrounded by a number of opponents. Its wide range can definitely play to your advantage.

CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

Prepare For Arms

Similar to many titles in this quickly growing genre, *Bard's Tale* will feature a real-time, action-based combat system. Players will "have access to multiple types of melee weapons, including swords, dirks for sword/dirk duel wielding, traditional Scottish two-handed claymores and flails." In addition, bows (for ranged combat) and weapon upgrades will also be available, but "through questing for them or as rewards for completing missions." In all, there are about 30

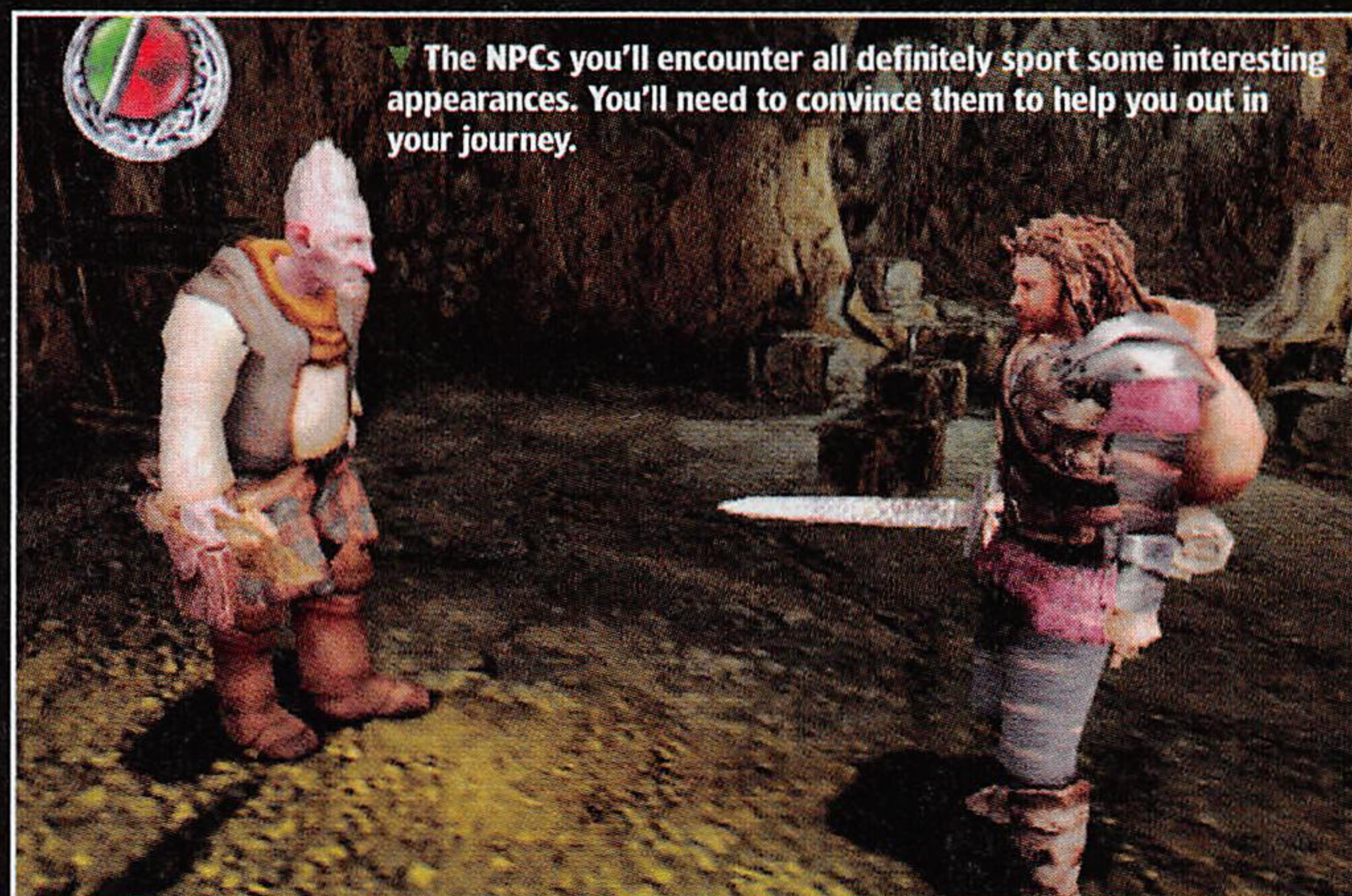
weapons, several of which will be able to perform special, bonus attacks. For example, the Ravensteel Broadsword causes additional magic damage when it hits an opponent.

However, despite the large number of weapons, players need not be worried about equipment management. Almost everything is handled by the game itself. If you happen across a more powerful sword or piece of armor, you don't have to scroll through your inventory to find that out. The more powerful items will automatically replace your old equipment, allowing you to focus more on the strategy of defeating encountered enemies.

The Party of Monsters

Instead of the more-traditional route of players having to recruit characters into their party, *Bard's Tale* will do things a little bit differently. Depending on the power level of the instruments the Bard has in his inventory, he'll actually be able to summon and control up to five different creatures at a time. And, since every summoned creature has its own unique personality and behavior patterns, there is definitely a bit of strategy involved in using the right ones during the right situation. You see, you wouldn't want to call for an attack-focused creature when you're trying to be more "cautious and stealthy."

In the end, the team is aiming for around 16



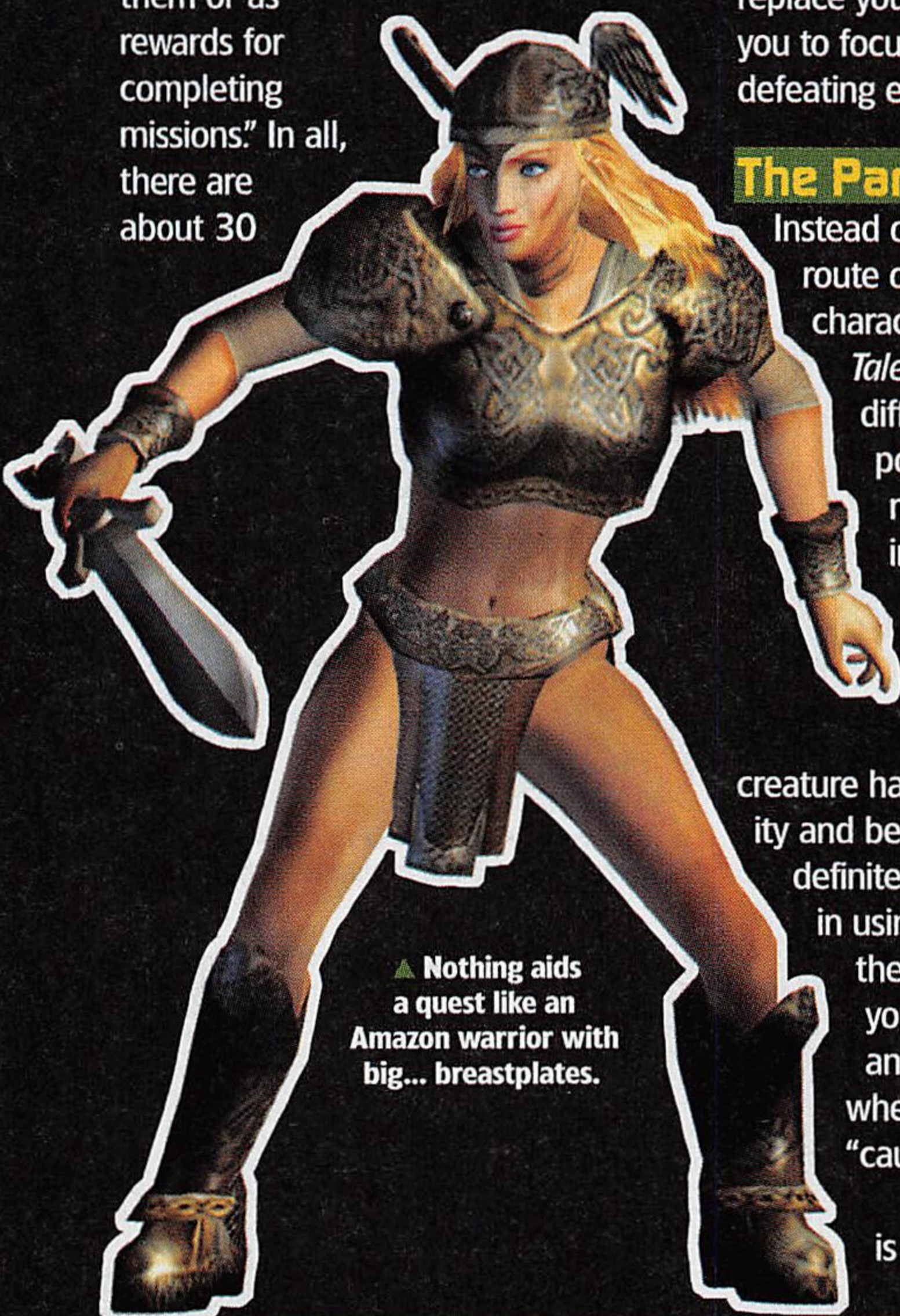
▼ The NPCs you'll encounter all definitely sport some interesting appearances. You'll need to convince them to help you out in your journey.



▲ Using magical instruments, you'll be able to summon creatures, like this energy spider, and use them to fight for you.



▲ Whatever you do, be as friendly to this dog as you can. Otherwise, he may be a thorn in your side later on.



▲ Nothing aids a quest like an Amazon warrior with big... breastplates.

different summoned creatures, all of which will be able to be "upgraded with more powerful magic to give them additional powers."

A Healthy Dose of Laughter

It's definitely an interesting approach the creative folks at inXile are taking in their revival of the *Bard's Tale*

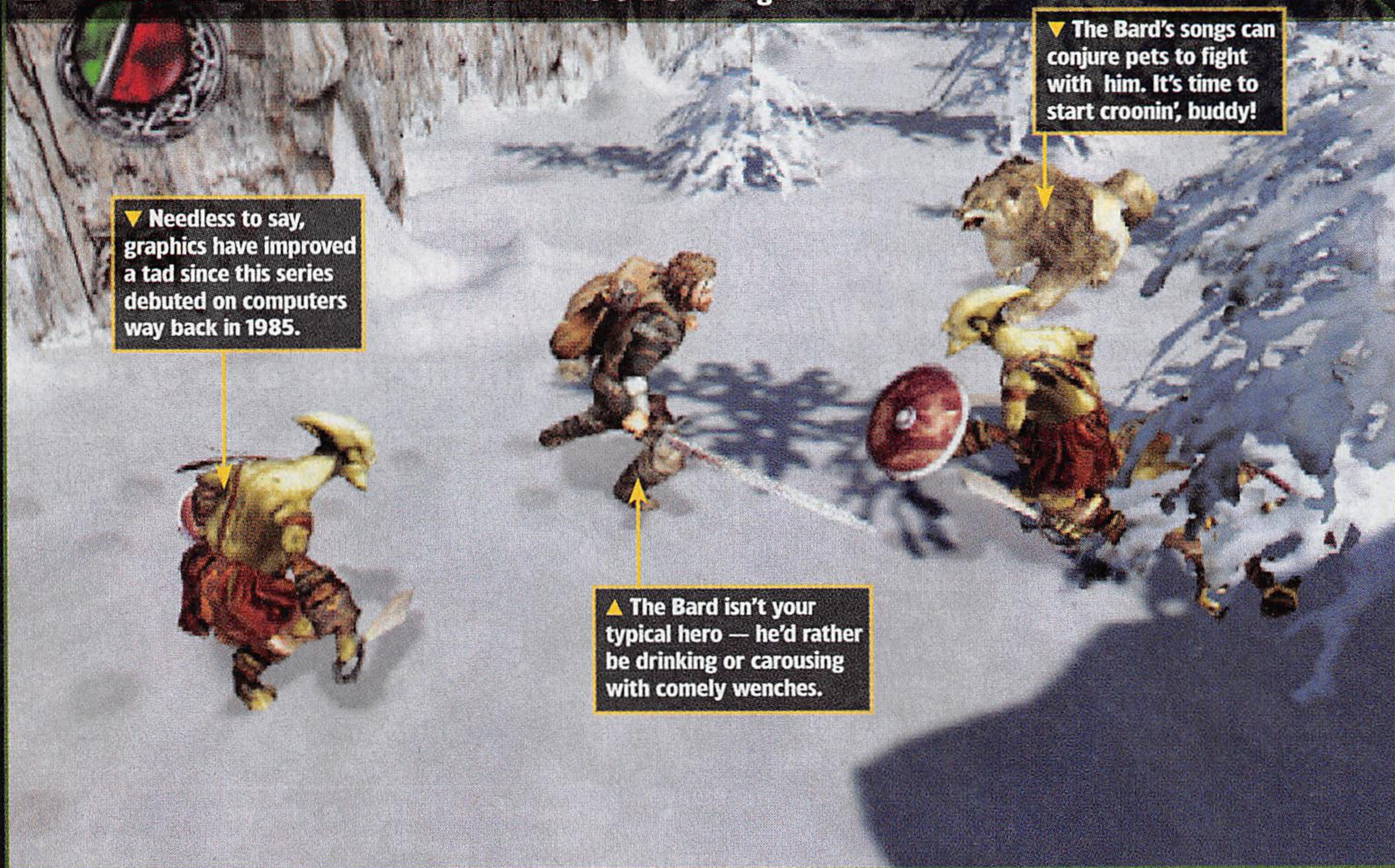
franchise. The usage of satirical and somewhat sarcastic comedy, along with countless surprises, looks to take this game in a bold, new direction. We definitely were impressed with the sheer number of humorous situations and settings that the player will no doubt find themselves in. That's the strange thing, though. Unlike most other developers, who often find themselves struggling for good humor, the challenge for this team is more in making sure that there's enough solid action to balance out the laughs. Fortunately, that's a challenge they are very well aware of and determined to overcome. In fact, they want the gamers to know that this game isn't just going to be a gag a minute. You'll "definitely have to deal with epic battles, boss fights, party building and a robust combat and magic system."

That's definitely good news to us, because even in this early state, the game already looks better and features far more variety than the original *Dark Alliance*. If everything can come together before next Christmas, and we think it will, then *Bard's Tale* should have little problem impressing gamers and winding up on several editors' must-have lists. And that, as they say, is no laughing matter.

STEPHEN FROST

PSM BREAKDOWN

An up-close look at the game in action



▼ Needless to say, graphics have improved a tad since this series debuted on computers way back in 1985.

▼ The Bard's songs can conjure pets to fight with him. It's time to start croonin', buddy!

▲ The Bard isn't your typical hero — he'd rather be drinking or carousing with comely wenches.

THE BUZZ

Knee-slapping humor and solid action make this a must-watch for any action RPG fan.



I'm not a diva, but I play one on TV.

ONLY IN
PSM
NEW SCREENS

GAME INFO

PUB ACCLAIM

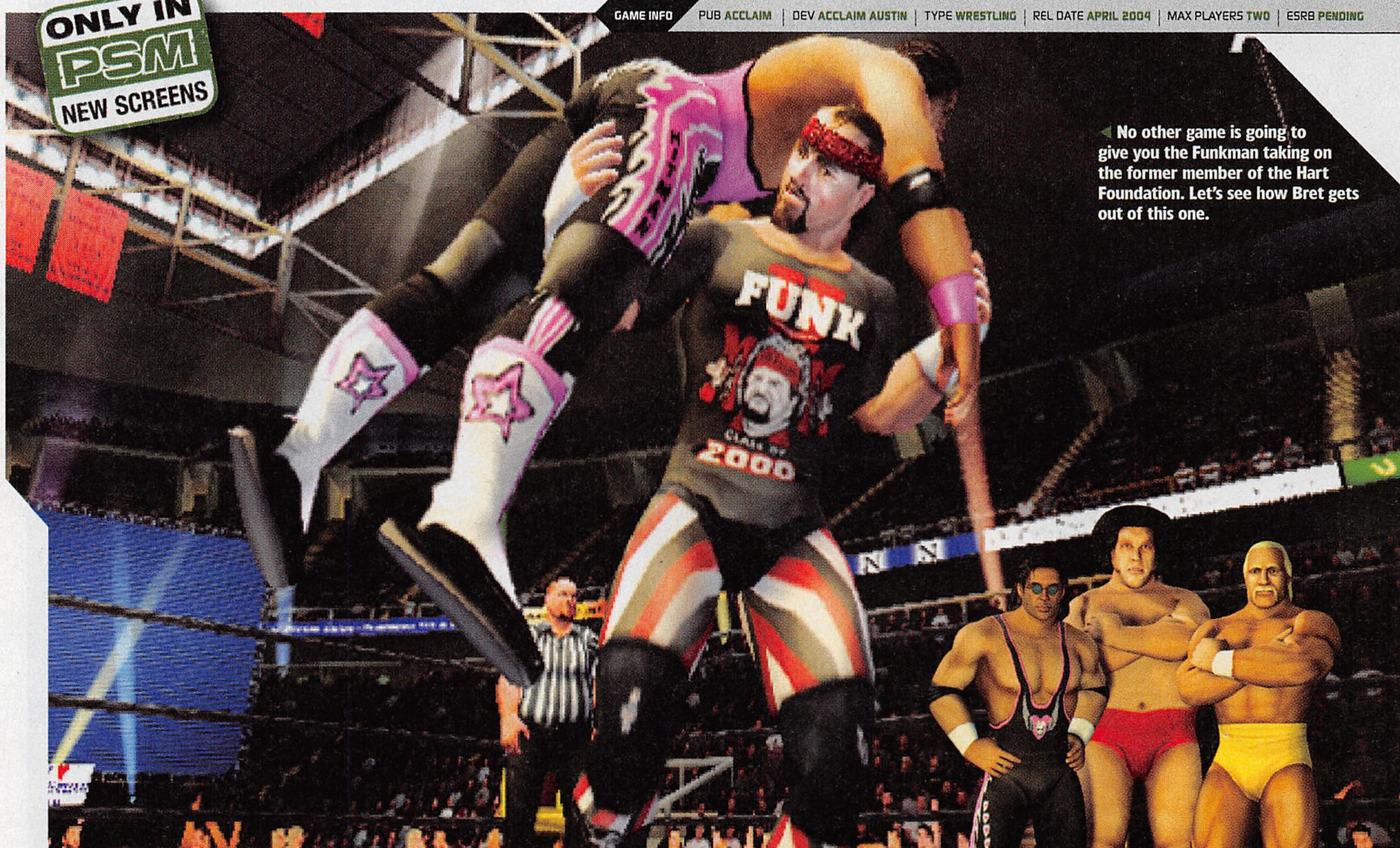
DEV ACCLAIM AUSTIN

TYPE WRESTLING

REL DATE APRIL 2004

MAX PLAYERS TWO

ESRB PENDING

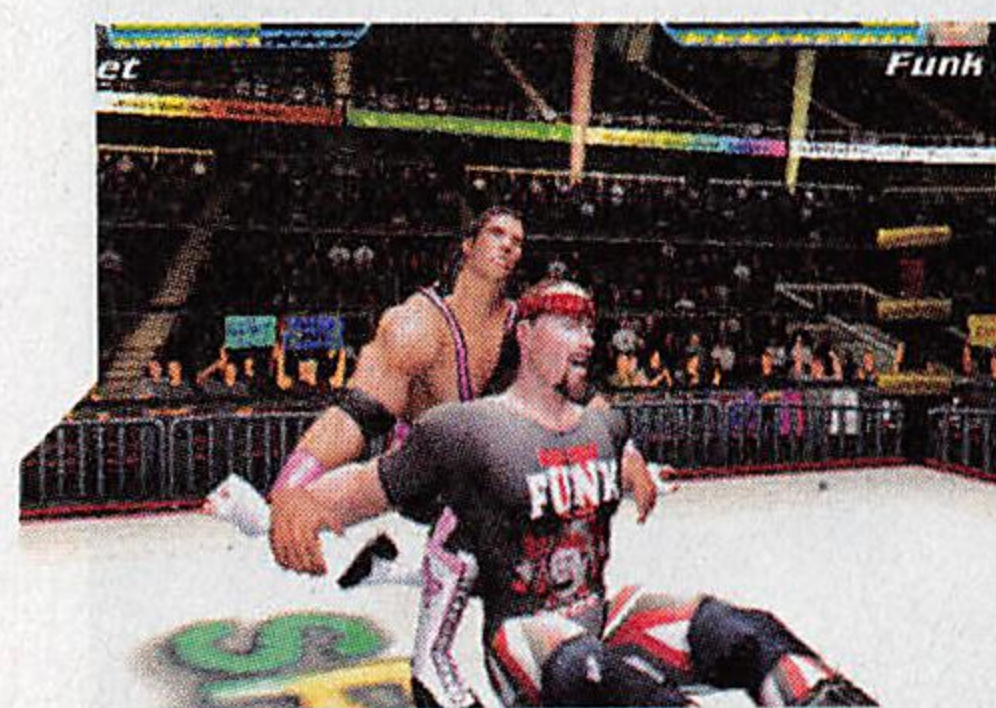


◀ No other game is going to give you the Funkman taking on the former member of the Hart Foundation. Let's see how Bret gets out of this one.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING: SHOWDOWN

Acclaim's wrestler gets a change of venue and developer

Not to be outdone by the team at THQ, Acclaim has fired back with its own dose of grappling goodness with its recent announcement of the third installment of the *Legends of Wrestling* series. Dropping the numeric connotations in favor of the a snappy subtitle, *LOW: SHOWDOWN* is aiming to be the company's best wrestling game yet; and hopes to give the reigning champ at camp THQ a run for its money.



▲ Submission moves are going to play much more of a role this time around. You're going to need to weaken your opponents strategically to win.

THE BUZZ

The numerous changes could give THQ a serious power slam.

Developed for the first time by the *All-Star Baseball* experts at Acclaim's Austin studios, *SHOWDOWN* is set to feature more than 70 of the all-time greats. Dory Funk, Bret "The Hitman" Hart, Scott Steiner, Andre the Giant, and the Ultimate Warrior are but a few of the confirmed superstars set to appear, and each of them is reported to react and behave a lot more realistically than they did in last year's version.

If varied match types instead of rosters are more your speed, however, then *Legends of Wrestling* shouldn't disappoint you there, either, as it boasts all sorts of new and competitive modes, including table matches, ladder matches, cage matches, first blood contests, the battle royal, handicap bouts, and several others that should keep fans busy for weeks.

Other new upgrades this year include an enhanced visual presentation, improved create-a-legend features, real life arenas, and a tutorial hosted by Bret Hart himself. And to further ensure the game's realism, the Ultimate Warrior himself is working closely with the

development team to make sure that everything turns out just right.

Scheduled for release on the PlayStation 2 this April, *Legends of*

Wrestling: SHOWDOWN definitely has potential. We'll be back to update you on its progress throughout the coming months. JEREMY DUNHAM/STEPHEN FROST

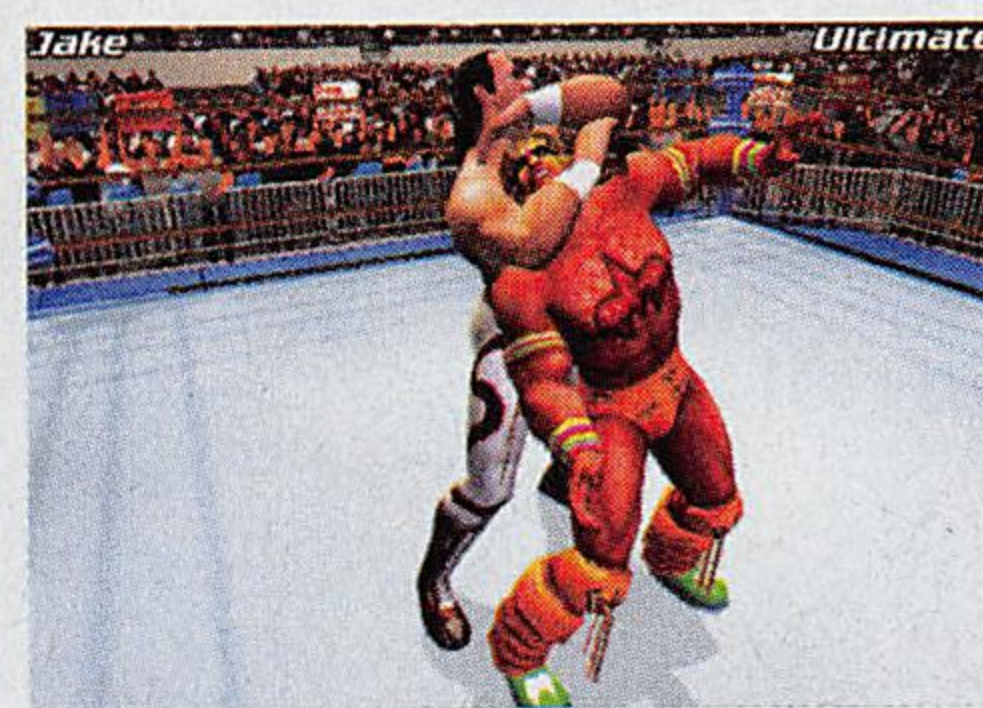
The Ultimate Addition

While a bit player in the "real" world of wrestling, the Ultimate Warrior is looking to get back into the spotlight. He's even providing assistance to the game developers for the "ultimate" authenticity.

▶ You just have to love the adrenaline-pumping antics of the Warrior. He may not say much, but he's all action.



▲ They may never have fought in real life, but now it's possible to challenge the Iron Sheik with the American Dream.



▲ The audience is going to be a lot more interactive and reactive to what's going on in the ring.

PlayStation 2



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GAME INFO

PUB NAMCO

DEV WIDESCREEN

TYPE ACTION/ADVENTURE

REL DATE JUNE

MAX PLAYERS ONE

ESRB PENDING



▲ Putting the wrong object on the pedestal could be disastrous.



◀ There's going to be a big focus on puzzles and traps, so that spinning blade you see behind Duran is nothing out of the ordinary.

THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS

Namco takes a swing at a dark, new franchise

A new action adventure title from Namco, *Plague of Darkness* puts players into the helm of Duran, a Knight of the Order. Duran is called upon to save civilization when the Black Plague runs riot, and he'll have to surmount traps, obstacles, and monsters to do so. Duran is armed with your classic weaponry, including swords, daggers and crossbows, and his adventure will take him across eight settings with over fifty locations.

The title is a sort of *Resident MediEvil*, as Duran is forced to fight everything from infected people to animals driven mad by the disease.

Zombies, giant spiders, and your typical hounds from hell will all make an appearance, but this time you don't have to worry about running out of ammunition. Unfortunately for Duran, not even the sharpest sword can cut down a swarm of bacteria that invades his bloodstream, and this will be reflected in gameplay. Duran's abilities are directly tied to his lifebar: the sicker he becomes, the worse he fares in combat.

Fortunately, Duran has a Namco-based fighting system to back him up, letting him attack, block, counter and even grapple with the infected. In what seems to be inspired from Konami's *Castlevania* series, he can also collect twenty-two actual Tarot cards, which will invoke magic spells and alter his special abilities. But will Duran go down in videogame history or be just the Belmont's whipping boy? We'll keep you updated as development on this title progresses.

DOUG TRUEMAN/STEPHEN FROST

◀ The architectural designs of the game world are quite elaborate and feature a lot of variety.



THE BUZZ

Swords, traps and an infected populace should provide one action-packed adventure.



▲ Here's another classic example of a blade-based challenge. Better get your timing right or you'll end up over the edge, split into little pieces.



▲ Just like mindless zombies, these plague-infested creatures persistently attack without reason.

Using The Deck

By collecting various Tarot cards, our hero can perform additional spells and abilities. It's definitely a great way to increase the overall depth and challenge of the game.



▲ Cards like this Empress one will endow Duran with abilities that go beyond his normal attacks.

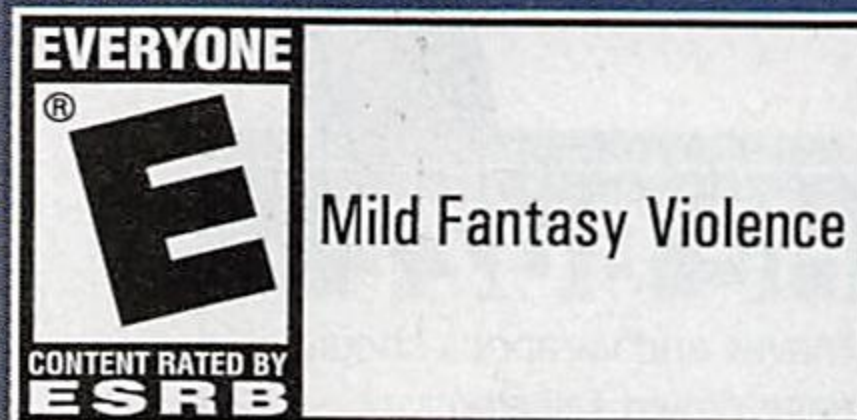


IT'S TIME FOR SOME NEW HEROES.



SONIC HEROES

It's Sonic Heroes, the all new game with an all new way to play. A revolutionary team-based system will have you switching characters on the fly. Twelve different heroes, four different teams and three different consoles make for one new game that never gets old.



PlayStation 2



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GAME INFO

PUB UBI SOFT

DEV UBI SOFT MONTREAL

TYPE ACTION

REL DATE MARCH

MAX PLAYERS 5 FOUR [ONLINE]

ESRB RATING PENDING



▲ While the normal game is strictly a loner affair, you'll find it necessary to work with your teammate during online play.



▲ The greatest challenge and fun is in the process of finding the best way to sneak into a given area. We love the adrenaline rush.

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

New info on Sam Fisher's latest adventure

Who can deny the brilliance of the original *Splinter Cell*? The game, while a little narrow in scope, still proved to be one of the year's biggest hits with its inspiring graphics and innovative stealth gameplay. *Pandora Tomorrow*, the first sequel in this inevitable franchise, will not only be taking the graphics and gameplay to a new level, but will also be introducing new mechanics that are



▲ You can bet that when all four people are in the same area during an online session, the action is going to get intense.

quite simply shocking.

At first glance, *Pandora Tomorrow* may not look that different from the last game, but that's because many of the additions and improvements relate to Sam's repertoire of moves and the enemy AI; Sam now has a half-split jump that can be used to reach higher ledges, as well as a move referred to as the "SWAT turn," that lets Fisher sneak by open doorways. In regards to the enemy AI, expect terrorists to now take hostages. Also, the flawed three-alarm system from the first game has been tweaked to allow for three enemy reactions: sight and search, equipping of flak jackets, and putting on Kevlar helmets.

As much as the first game was pushing the PS2's hardware, *Pandora Tomorrow* somehow squeezes out visuals that are significantly better; the light blooms are more refined, the

ONLY IN
PSM
NEW SCREENS

ONLINE
COMPATIBLE

character models look and animate amazingly well, and the new environments — especially the train and field levels — are stunning, to say the least.

Where *Pandora Tomorrow* will really be reaching new heights is in the multiplayer mode. Fully online and supporting voice chat, multiplayer allows for two-on-two play, with half the players being Shadownet spies and the other two mercenaries. The catch is that while the spies retain the familiar third-person view of the single-player campaign, playing as the mercenaries grants players the benefits of a first-person view.

The multiplayer is further fleshed out and balanced by giving each side unique gadgets and weapons to work with. For example, the mercenar-



THE BUZZ

More gadgets, moves and weapons should have the espionage crowd salivating.

Nice Cornering

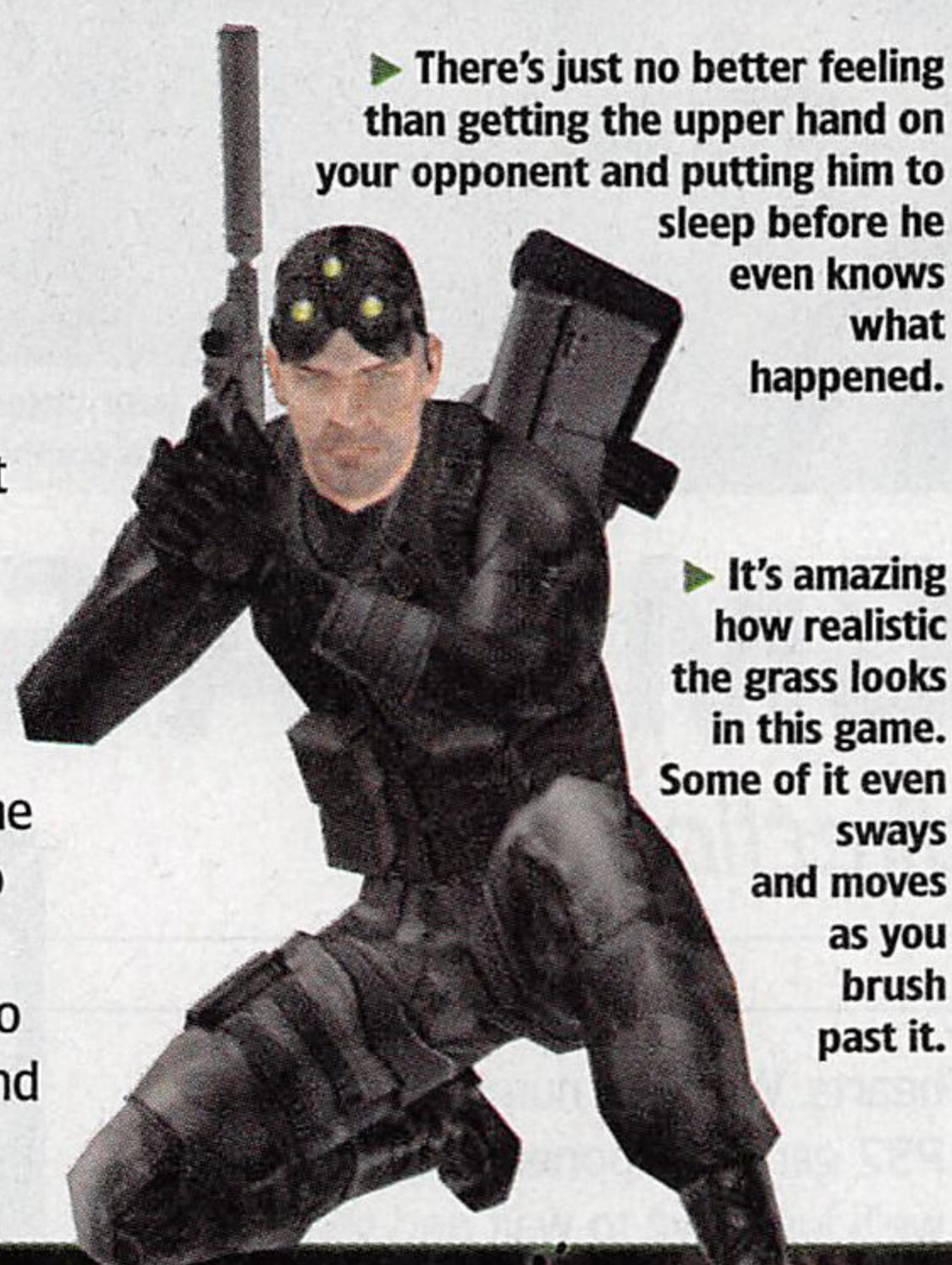
While now a classic maneuver in any espionage-style game, the corner peak is still extremely useful, especially when you just aren't sure what's around that next corner.



▲ With the increased intelligence of the enemy in *Pandora Tomorrow*, it will definitely be necessary for you to be as stealthy as possible. Don't even make a sound.

ies have a vision mode that detects and brightly illuminates electromagnetic sources (i.e. a gun, night vision goggles) at the cost of normal vision clarity. The spies are then virtually invisible until they use an electromagnetic source. The problem is that they're also unarmed. Every gadget and weapon features this clever dichotomy, making the multiplayer mode as tense as it is innovative.

Pandora Tomorrow looks to be the game the original strived to be. As to whether it can successfully reach its lofty ambitions, well, we'll just have to wait until its release next March to find out. KAISER HWANG/STEPHEN FROST

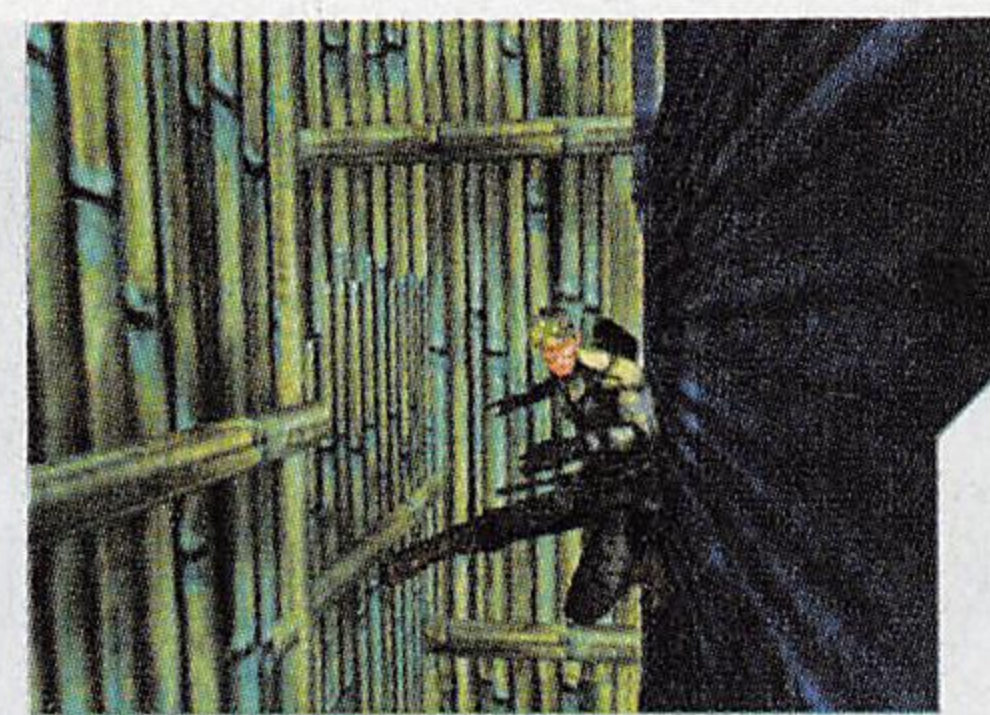


► There's just no better feeling than getting the upper hand on your opponent and putting him to sleep before he even knows what happened.

► It's amazing how realistic the grass looks in this game. Some of it even sways and moves as you brush past it.



▲ The headshot is still the only certainty in games like this. Don't give him a chance to shoot back, that's for sure.



▲ Using the new Half-split Jump, you can now reach areas that would have been unreachable in the first game.



A Difference Of Perspective

Along with many of its other numerous and innovative online features, *Pandora Tomorrow* also presents players with two different views. The spies will play the game from the traditional third-person perspective, while the mercenaries get the "benefit" of a first-person perspective.



▲ Using their motion sensors, the Mercs can pick up any sort of movement and track its location easily.



▲ We still prefer the third-person view because you can see a bit more of the surrounding environment.

PSM BREAKDOWN

An up-close look at the game in action



◀ Since darkness and shadow are your allies, it's never good to be right in the middle of an opponent's spotlight.

▼ While relatively straightforward, the inventory window still provides important info.

▲ The balance of different gadgets and weapons will make online play definitely very interesting.

▲ Even during multiplayer matches, spies will still play the game from a third-person perspective.





SYPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN

Will fans embrace the series' new online direction?

The first three *Syphon Filter* games on the PSone were a nice alternative to other competing titles in the genre. Being the hits that they were, we're surprised it took as long as it did for the next iteration of the series to finally show its face. But the reason for the downtime is now clear: online play.

Syphon Filter: Omega Strain is a logical evolution of the series and

now includes support for online cooperative play. While the game can still be completed as a solo experience, the game becomes much more diverse and interesting with a little help from some friends. With multi-player-specific moves, and multiple branches in missions, the addition of more players not only increases the amount of firepower available to the protagonists, but also adds another layer of depth to combative and exploratory strategies.

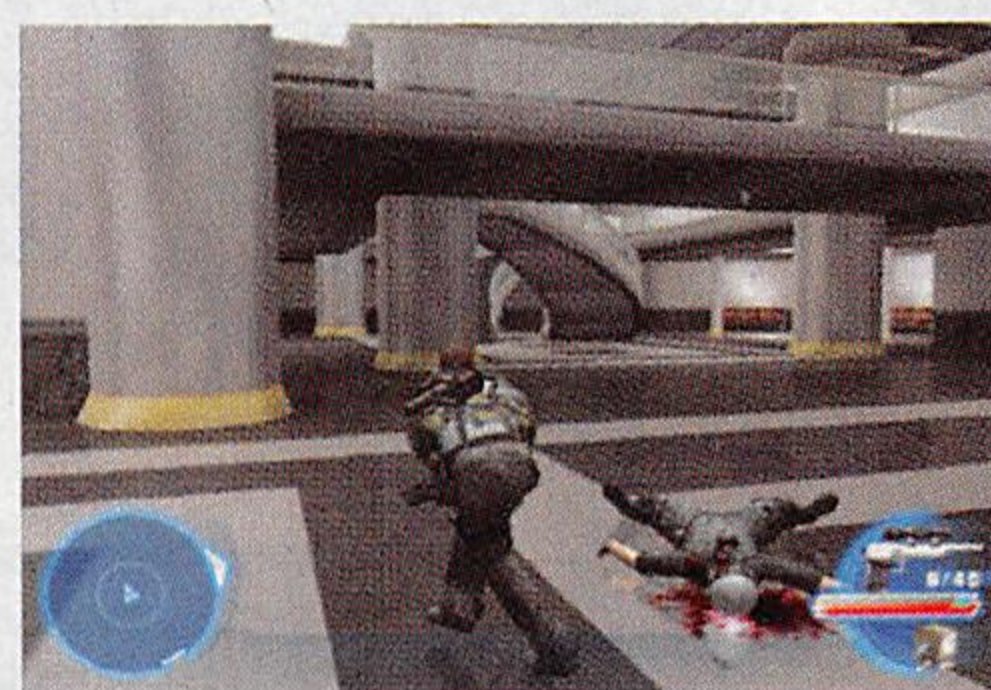
From what we've played of the game, *Omega Strain* looks to be headed down the right road. The single-player game feels whole on its own, and the online functionality actually serves a purpose as opposed to existing for requisite reasons. We do have a few nagging problems with the game, though. The visuals, while competent, leave a little to be desired when contrasted against other titles soon to hit the market. Additionally, the control scheme is of the love-it-or-hate-it variety, and the auto-targeting can either be life-saving or frustrating.

Still, we're optimistic about as the series has a firm nostalgic grip on our

hearts. With the number of online PS2 games exponentially increasing, we'll just have to wait and see if the final product can deliver something fresh, innovative, and most importantly, fun. KAISER HWANG/STEPHEN FROST



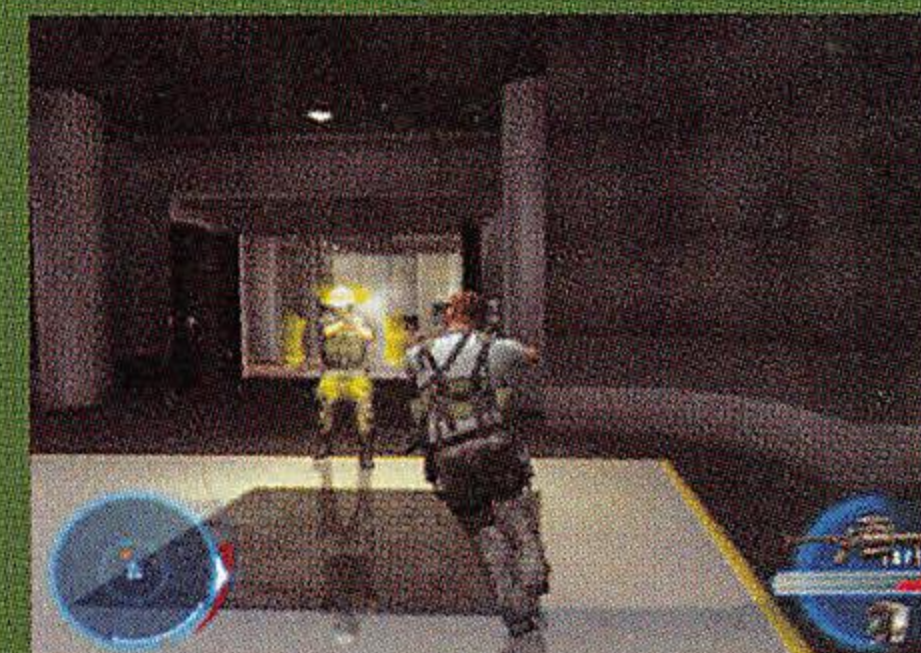
▲ You can't have an espionage-style game and not have some sort of laser-based security device. It's a staple of the genre.



▲ In most cases, you'll want to remain crouched, so that you can't be easily seen by the patrolling guards.

Many Ways To Die

As with most games in this genre, *Omega Strain* can be played in two different major ways. You can go all-out and just shoot everything you see or you can be a bit stealthier and eliminate enemies without a single shot. What will you do?



▲ Most people prefer the direct approach of running forward and mowing down everything in the way.

▼ However, others like the more elegant approach of attacking from behind and surprising the enemies.

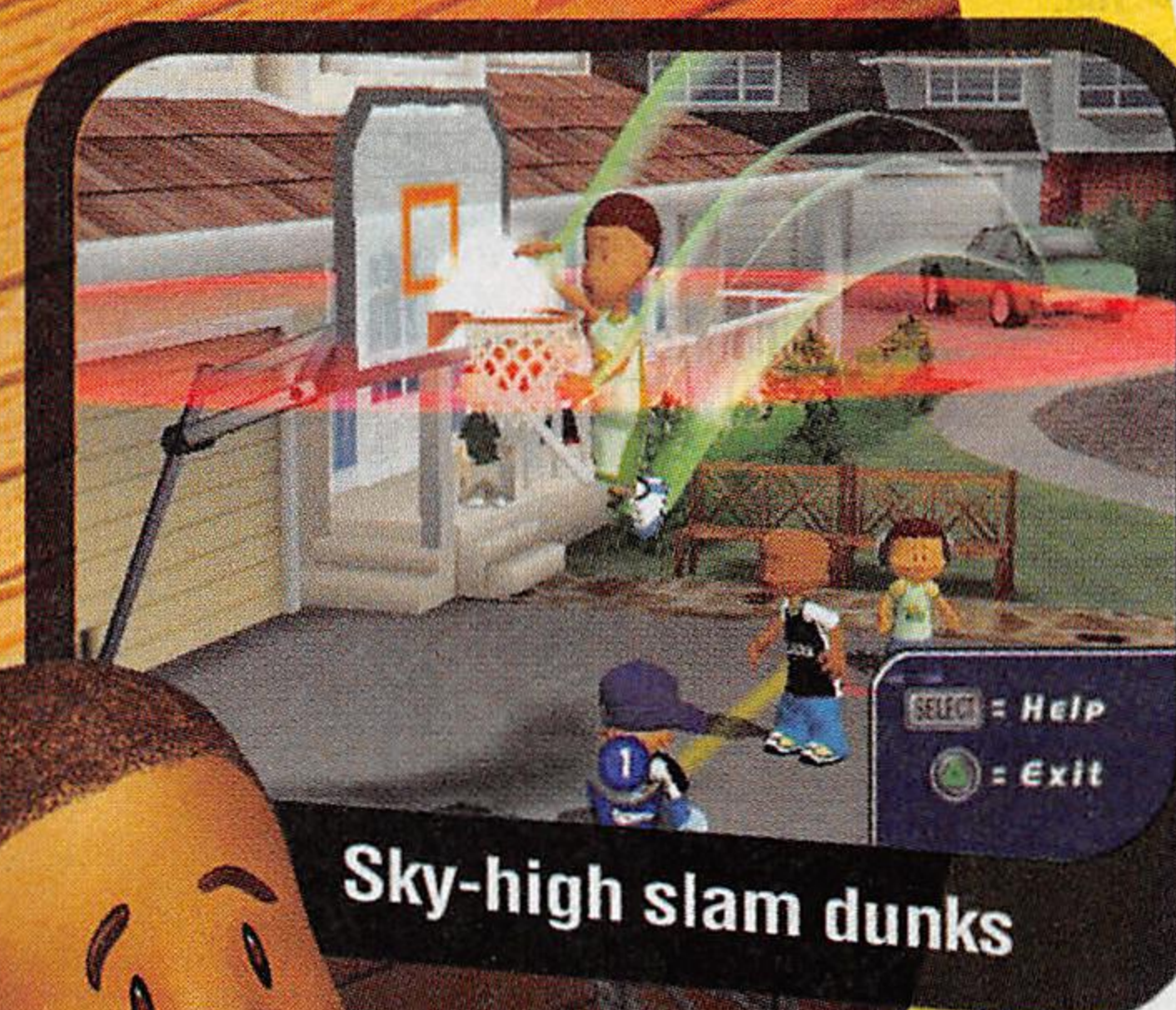
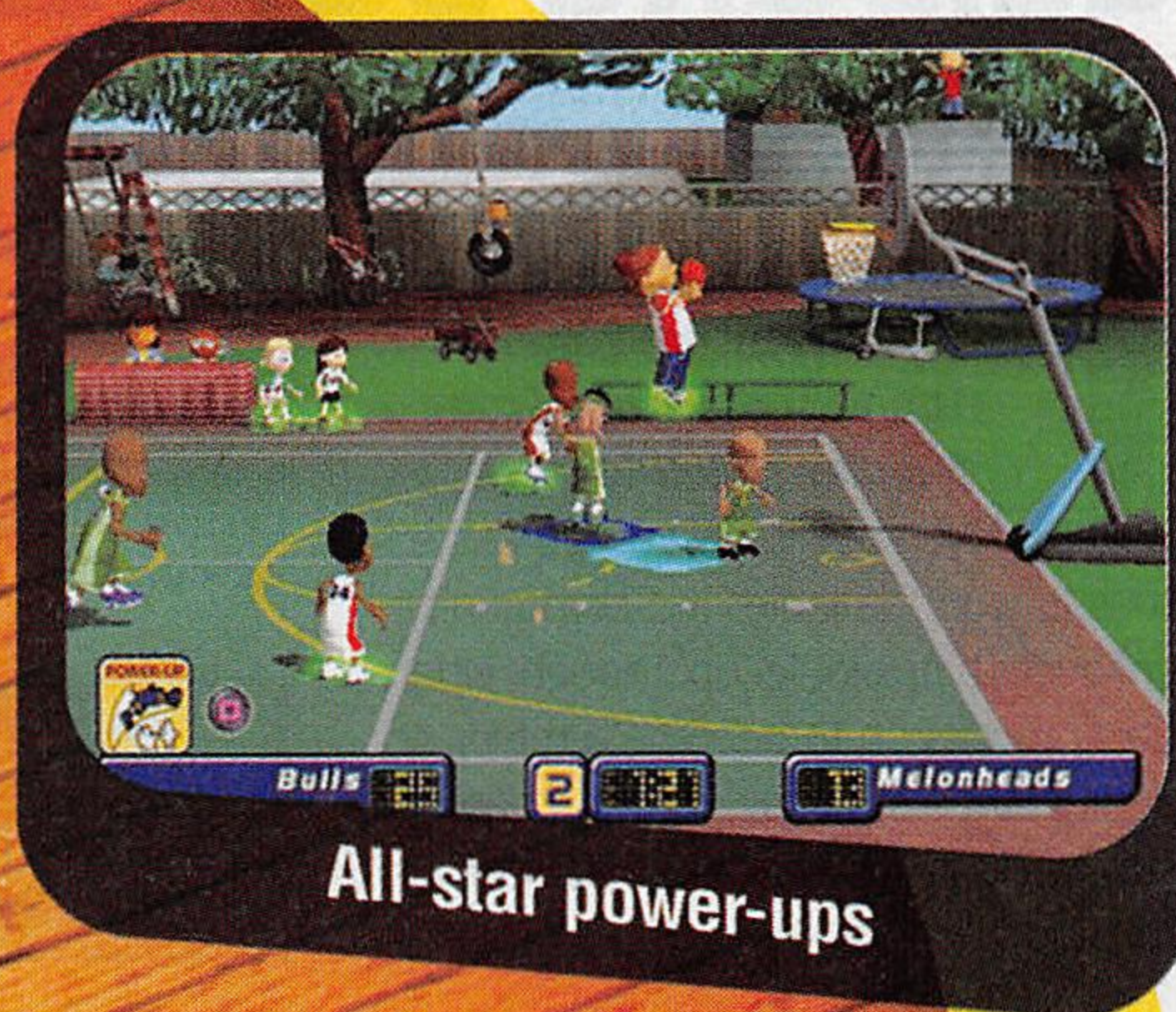


▲ With a highly accurate targeting system, you can aim at opponents that are quite far away... and still hit them.

THE BUZZ

The cooperative gameplay definitely makes us a bit interested.

Need a guy to shoot and score?

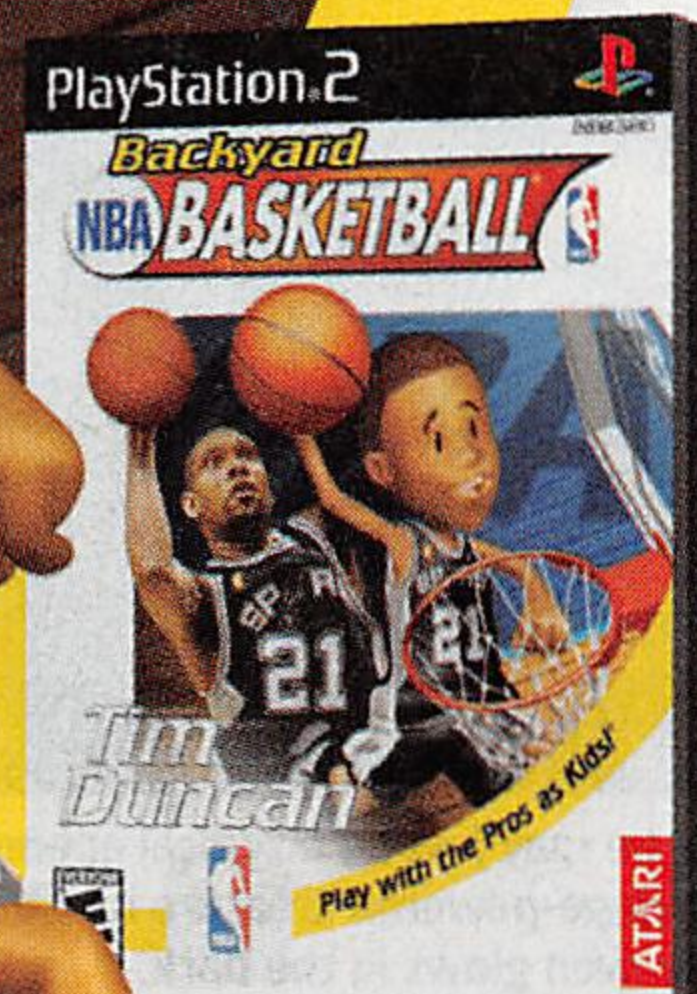


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GAME INFO PUB VIVENDI | DEV HIGH VOLTAGE | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS ONE | RELEASE DATE FALL | ESRB PENDING

LEISURE SUIT LARRY

Filled with naughty puns and double entendres, this adventure game in the vein of *Escape From Monkey Island* follows unlikely lover-boy Larry Lovage as he tries to woo the ladies in... community college. Things look up, though, when Larry moves on to become a minor reality TV celebrity as part of a dating show. This raunchy ride will be ready to roll this fall — we'll give you a guess as

to what the ESRB will rate it.

RANDY NELSON

► Ah, the shower peephole mini-game: a necessity in any raunchy, college-themed videogame.



THE BUZZ

How many PS2 owners will remember the original? It's one more game for "grownups."

► The, ahem, "user interface" is certainly... unique.

▼ It's definitely not *Monkey Island*, but there are monkeys.



GAME INFO PUB MIDWAY | DEV MIDWAY | MAX PLAYERS FOUR | TYPE SPORTS | REL FEBRUARY | ESRB TEEN



▲ The court designs are often clever and are located in rather unique places.

ONLINE COMPATIBLE

ONLY IN PSM NEW SCREENS



▲ Taking on Larry Bird and other greats is always fun, especially when the crowd is around.

NBA BALLERS

It's been a long time coming, but Midway's homage to the glitzier side of basketball is almost finished. Known simply as *NBA Ballers*, this internally-developed hoopster will not only focus on over-the-top backyard pick-up games, but living the life as a superstar as well.

Players will also be able to unlock and compete with 24 different NBA legends and 60 of today's hottest superstars. Other cool features, like an in-depth create-a-baller option,

personalized crib customization, and four-player simultaneous action should entice hearty B-Ball fans.

Our only question mark is how the gameplay will stand up to the existing arcade king, *NBA Street*. With the release date creeping ever closer, we'll get our answers soon enough.

JEREMY DUNHAM

THE BUZZ

Crazy courts and online play may give this game a chance to score.

GAME INFO PUB MIDWAY | DEV SURREAL | REL DATE FEBRUARY | TYPE ACTION | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB MATURE



▲ He may just be a typical enemy, but this syringe-powered creature is still pretty scary. He even glows in the dark.



▲ To say the least, most of the creature designs would make Clive Barker proud. They're downright freaky.

THE SUFFERING

Cinematic horror that could give Resident Evil chills

► They may be supernatural in nature, but these creatures still seem to have a major weakness for good ol' bullets.

Originally scheduled for release on Halloween, Midway's action/horror title known as *The Suffering* has been relatively quiet these past few months. Delayed until February so that the team at Surreal could fine-tune the product even further, it's quickly transformed into one of more anticipated action titles of the spring.

Far more cinematic than your typical third-person battler, *The Suffering* is one of the most brutal pieces of software that we've seen. Unbelievably violent, bloody, and vulgar, its combination of shooting, adventure, and hand-to-hand combat makes for a pretty complete package; though the producers have assured us that the game will definitely be more about action than puzzles.



Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of *The Suffering*, however, is the included transformation element. Powered by a sanity meter not unlike what's found in Nintendo's *Perfect Dark*, the loss of one's marbles immediately transforms the hero Torque into a giant rampaging monster — complete with new attacks, abilities,

and more. It's definitely an interesting dynamic and we can't wait to see how it all ends up. We're ready to be scared! JEREMY DUNHAM/STEPHEN FROST

THE BUZZ

This could end up being one of the scariest and creepiest games of all time.

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**ONLY IN
PSM
NEW SCREENS**

GAME INFO

PUB ACCLAIM

DEV ACCLAIM CHELTINGHAM

TYPE ACTION

REL DATE MARCH

MAX PLAYERS ONE

ESRB TEEN

► For a normal person, three-on-one might be a challenge, but for a CIA field agent, it's just another day at the office.



ALIAS

The hit TV series gets an action-packed PS2 debut



Oftentimes, games based on movie or television

licenses fail in execution because a priority is put on recreating scenes rather than having solid gameplay. Fortunately for us, Acclaim's upcoming *Alias* game not only has interesting, television-worthy scenarios, but also some tight gameplay to boot.

Gamers take the

role of Sydney Bristow, a field agent for the CIA. As in the television show, Sydney uses costumes, stealth, and violence to get the job done. In the most recent build of the game, the gameplay foundation feels relatively solid, though the controls are still a little stiff. Also, the game's simplistic combat system could use some refining, as it's a bit sloppy at this point. However, we're sure some improvements will be made before the game's release. The undercover and stealth sequences are done well, though, bringing to mind *Splinter Cell* and even *Lupin the 3rd*.



▲ The best way to enter an area is not often the easiest. You'll find yourself crawling through countless tunnels, ventilation systems and elevator shafts.

We have high hopes for *Alias*, largely due to its excellent presentation; all of the main characters from the show lend their voices, and the graphics are looking above average, with the character models bearing a good likeness to their real-life counterparts. This is particularly noticeable in the cutscenes, though Sydney's in-game model bears an uncanny resemblance to the real-life Jennifer Garner. We're

also impressed by the camera panel-splitting used in the game. It's a very simple gimmick, but it does wonders for the game's tension levels.

THE BUZZ

A good storyline and solid action makes this a licensed game to look out for.

All in all, *Alias* may turn out to be a sleeper hit when it's released early next year. Hopefully the development team will take the time needed to fine-tune and polish the gameplay — we would all welcome an end to the drought of quality, license-based games. KAISER HWANG/STEPHEN FROST

Gadgets And Good Looks

Along with the sultry heroine that is Sydney Bristow, *Alias* has become a success due to the numerous gadgets and costumes that appear every week. This game will feature quite a bit of them, as well.

► From heat sensors to hot costumes, it seems that Sydney is well-equipped to take on any challenge that might come her way... and look good doing it.



▲ While the combat system is still a bit rough, we're sure that the developers will be able to smooth a lot of it out.



▲ You'll be able to use a large number of weapons, most of which will be found lying around the areas you visit.

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Wired Magazine



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater® 4
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MEGA MAN ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Capcom assembles a Mega-disc!

GAME INFO PUB CAPCOM | DEV CAPCOM | TYPE ACTION | REL DATE FEBRUARY | MAX PLAYERS ONE | ESRB RATING EVERYONE

It's official: **Mega Man** is immortal. He and his games will never die. And now, in fact, the entire core series (we're not talking about the *Legends* games, *Mega Man Xs*, or various other spin-offs) is being immortalized on one PS2 disc to treasure forever.

To mark the blue super-hero's 17th anniversary, Capcom is creating an anthology that includes *Mega Man* one through eight, which spanned the Nintendo Entertainment System, Super NES, Game Boy, and PlayStation. The



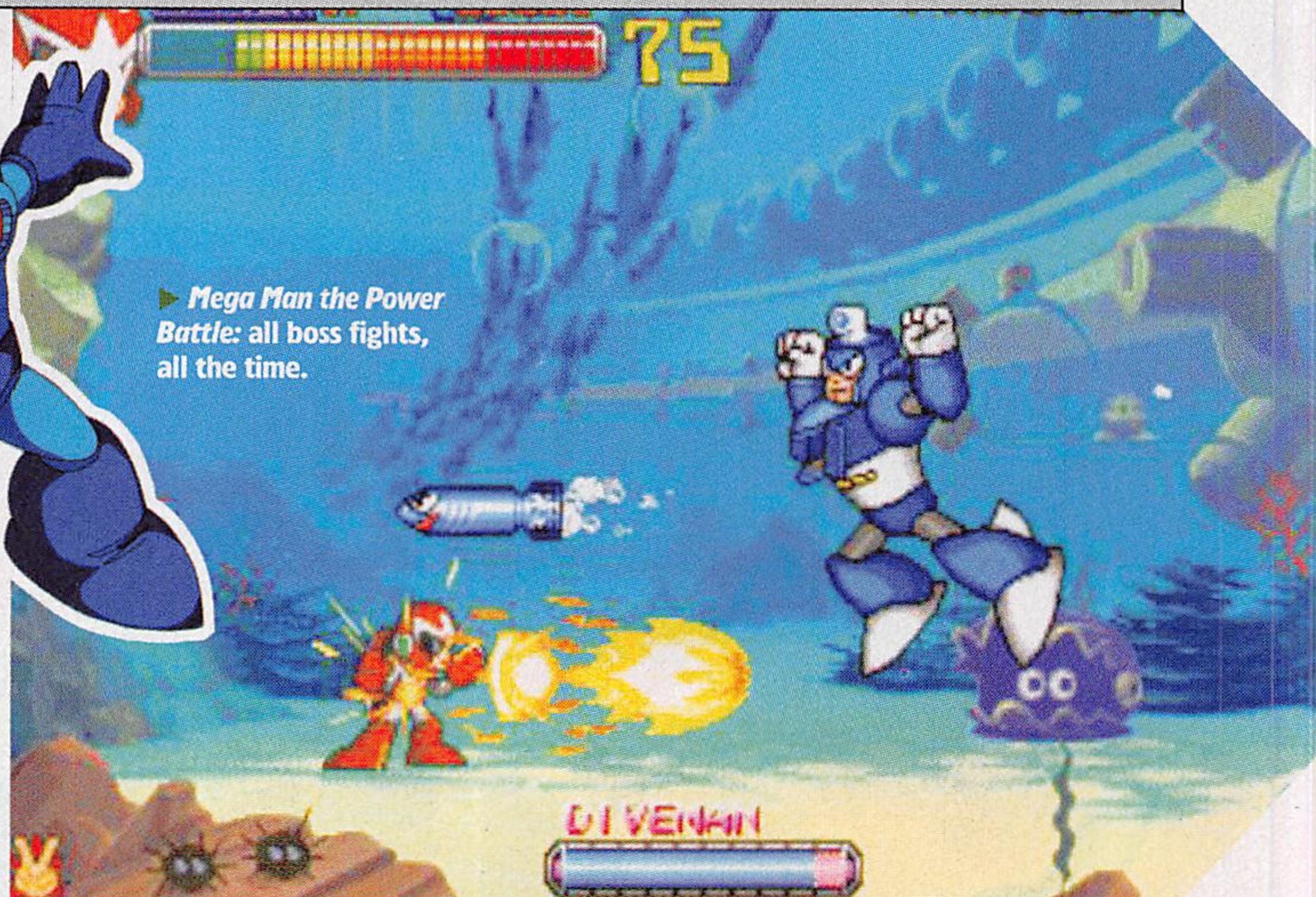
▲ Still on the NES, *Mega Man 2* nevertheless got a slight graphical face-lift.

games will feature their original 8- and 16-bit graphics, although updated soundtracks are planned. The disc will also feature two *Mega Man* arcade games, *Mega Man the Power Battle* and *Mega Man 2 the Power Fighters*, which weren't released stateside and are basically nothing but non-stop boss battles (not that that's a bad thing).

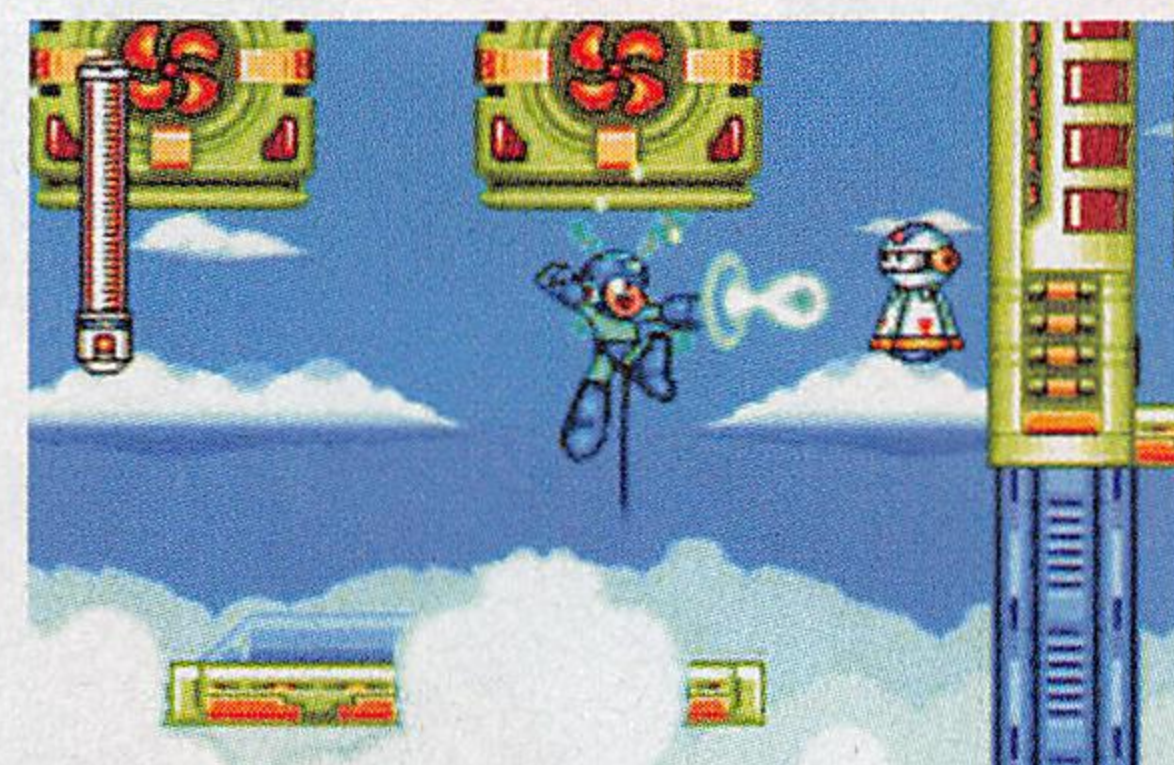
The disc is also slated to include loads of bonus material: artwork, developer interviews, TV commercials, and more, making it an almost certain must-have for *Mega Man* diehards and those who want to see how the series got its start. **RANDY NELSON**



► *Mega Man the Power Battle*: all boss fights, all the time.



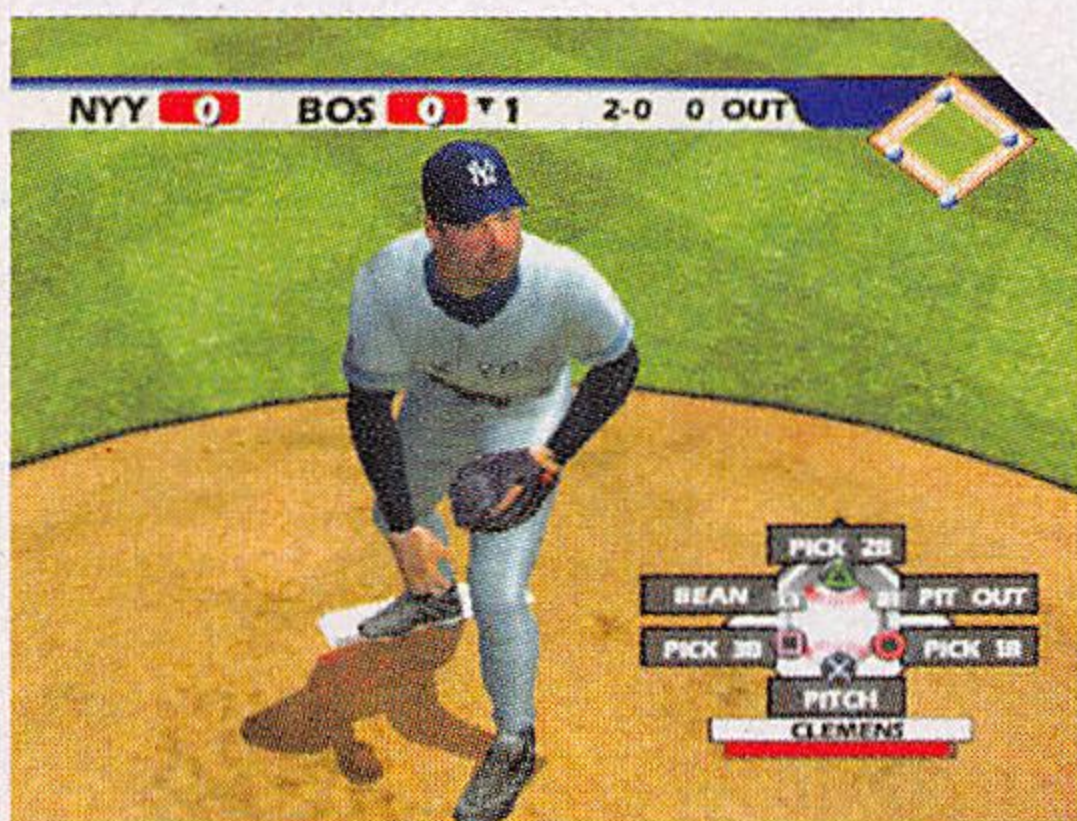
▼ Here's where it all started — gotta love those 8-bit graphics.



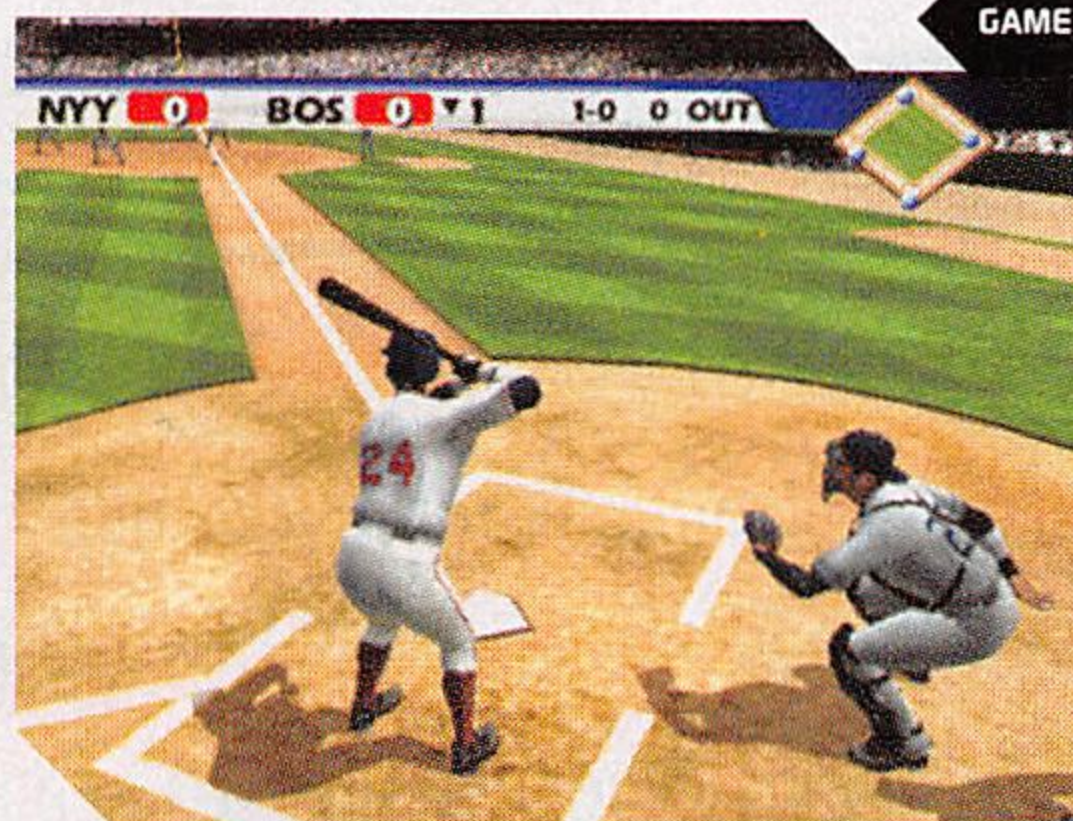
▲ *Mega Man 7* for the SNES was the first 16-bit game in the series and one of our favorites.

THE BUZZ

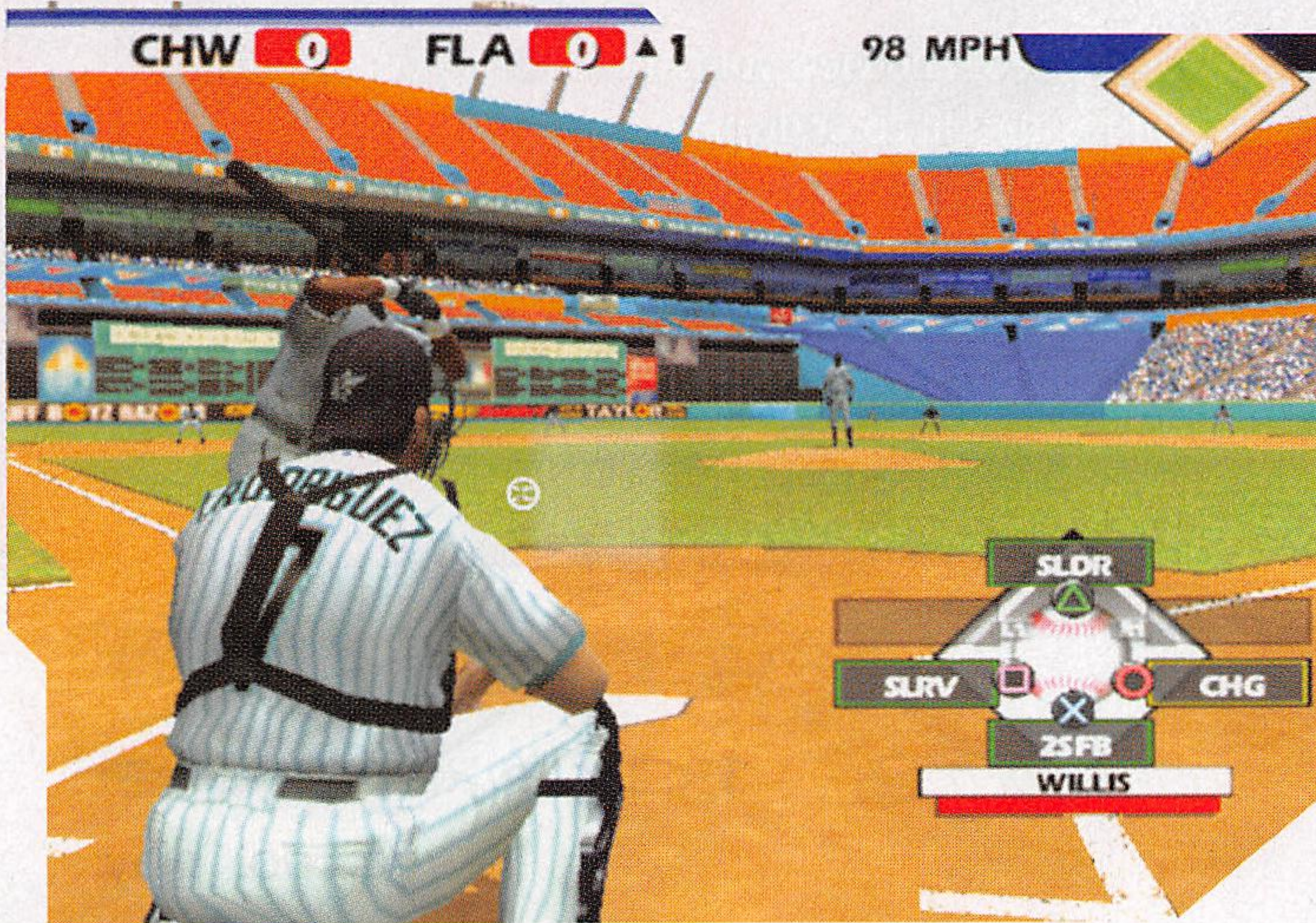
For fans of this long-lived series, this disc is a definite must-have!



▲ Minor graphical improvements mean that Clemens looks just that much more realistic.



▲ If Acclaim truly does follow through with its online support, it will be the first for the genre.



▲ After a few refinements have been made, the player interface will be just as intuitive as you would expect. Looks like it's time for a little high heat...

GAME INFO PUB ACCLAIM | DEV ACCLAIM AUSTIN | REL DATE FEB. | TYPE SPORTS | MAX PLAYERS TWO | ESRB EVERYONE

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2005

Can Acclaim hit a home run online?

ONLY IN
PSM
NEW SCREENS

All-Star Baseball 2004 was arguably the most feature-rich hardball title in history. It offered over 75 different

stadiums, a ton of different game modes, and realistic pitching speeds that blinded its players like no other title before it.

But with the upcoming 2005 edition boasting a feature that no other console baseball game has yet to include (re: true competitive online play), this newest version could end up becoming the definitive benchmark for the series.

All-Star Baseball 2005 is slated to include a whole lot more than that, as Acclaim plans on increasing the number of options and modes already available to its users, as well as setting its sights on tweaking pitcher and batter mechanics. With almost every

kind of batting technique known to the videogame world, *ASB 2005* is aiming for as wide an audience as possible.

Unfortunately, further details are still being kept under wraps, but with big talk coming out of Austin and some encouraging buzz coming out of the development team, we'll be following up on this one soon. Stay tuned. **JEREMY DUNHAM**

ONLINE
COMPATIBLE



◀ Can Acclaim pack even more must-have features into its next baseball update? We'll see soon enough.

THE BUZZ

With all its new features, *ASB* is going to be one of the strongest titles at bat this year.

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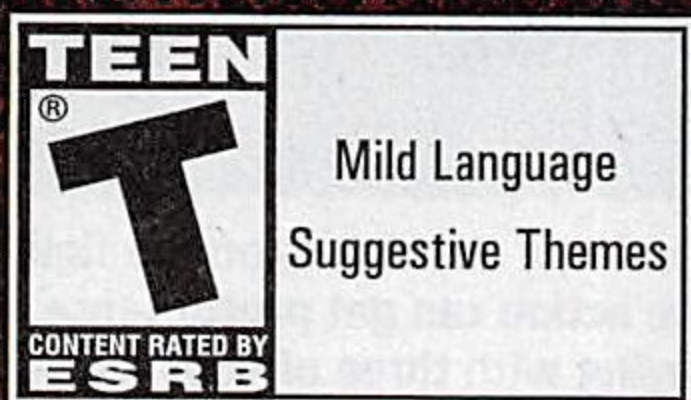
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GAME INFO

PUB EA

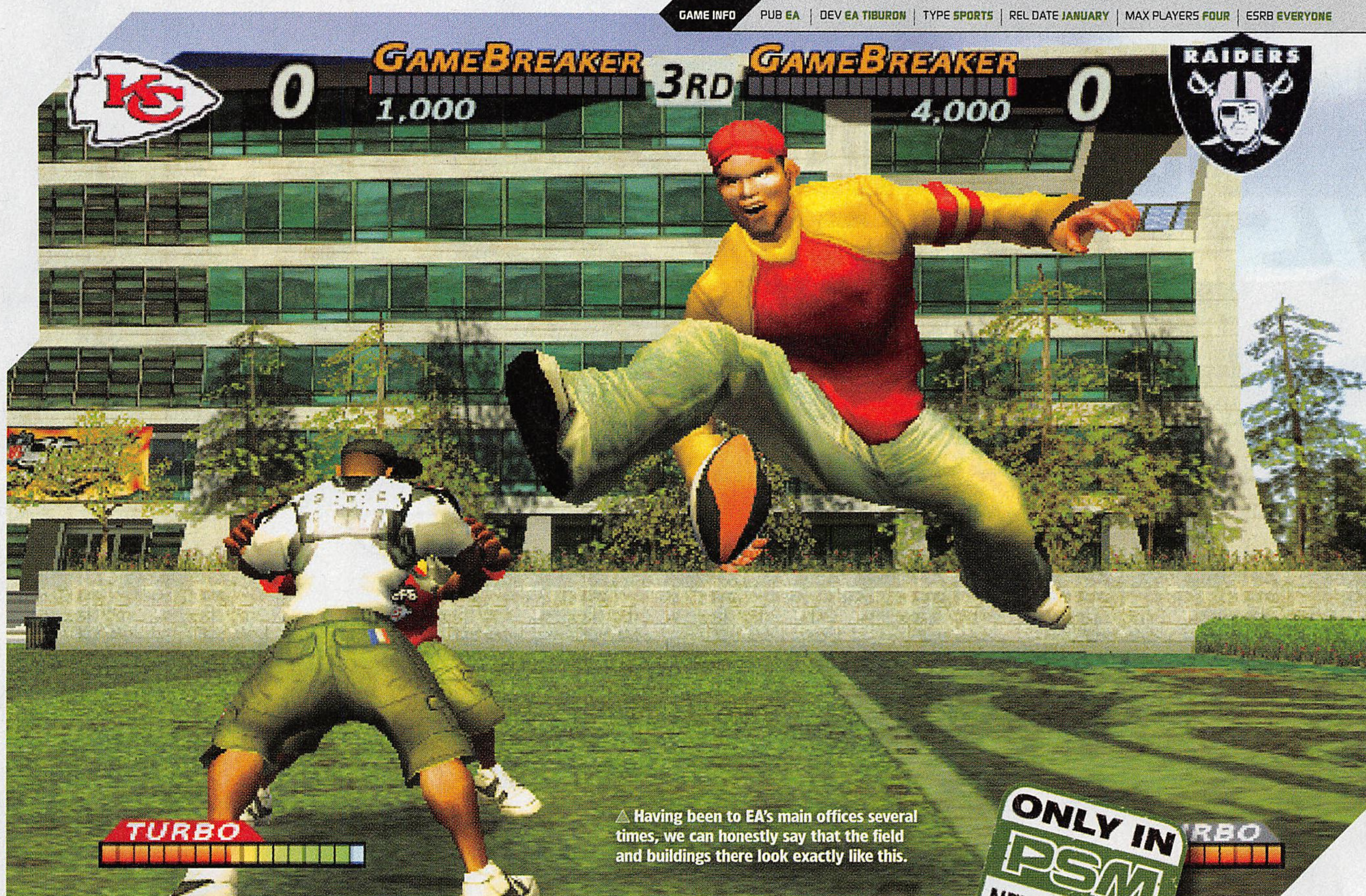
DEV EA TIBURON

TYPE SPORTS

REL DATE JANUARY

MAX PLAYERS FOUR

ESRB EVERYONE



▲ Having been to EA's main offices several times, we can honestly say that the field and buildings there look exactly like this.

ONLY IN
PSM
NEW SCREENS

ONLINE
COMPATIBLE

NFL STREET

We hit the turf and go hands-on with the next BIG title

Without a doubt, *NBA Street* has blossomed into a serious franchise showcasing incredible depth and over-the-top action. In fact, Vol. 2 of the game is considered by many to be one of the finest arcade-style basketball experiences of all time. That's why we were extremely excited

when word of an *NFL Street* title came about. No longer would gridiron fans be left out of the cold.

Developed by the same studio that brings *Madden* to the masses, *NFL Street* is readying to hit the gridiron with the same flair and excitement as its NBA brother. Only, it's also taking the experience to an even higher level with online play (PS2 only) and a rather lengthy NFL Challenge mode (where you have to complete over 200 objectives).

We took a near-complete build of the game for a spin and definitely enjoyed our time with the pigskin. The eight unique fields really add variety to it all and showcase some rather interesting locations, such as Legends Park in Cleveland. You can even play at EA's Redwood Shores headquarters! On the visual side, player models look great, as do their animations, especially when they pull off some of their major "stylin'" moves. Some of the trick plays are just awesome to watch.

With all 32 NFL teams present and around 40 different players to choose from, you can bet that the 7-on-7

action is going to get pretty crazy this January. We just can't wait to head

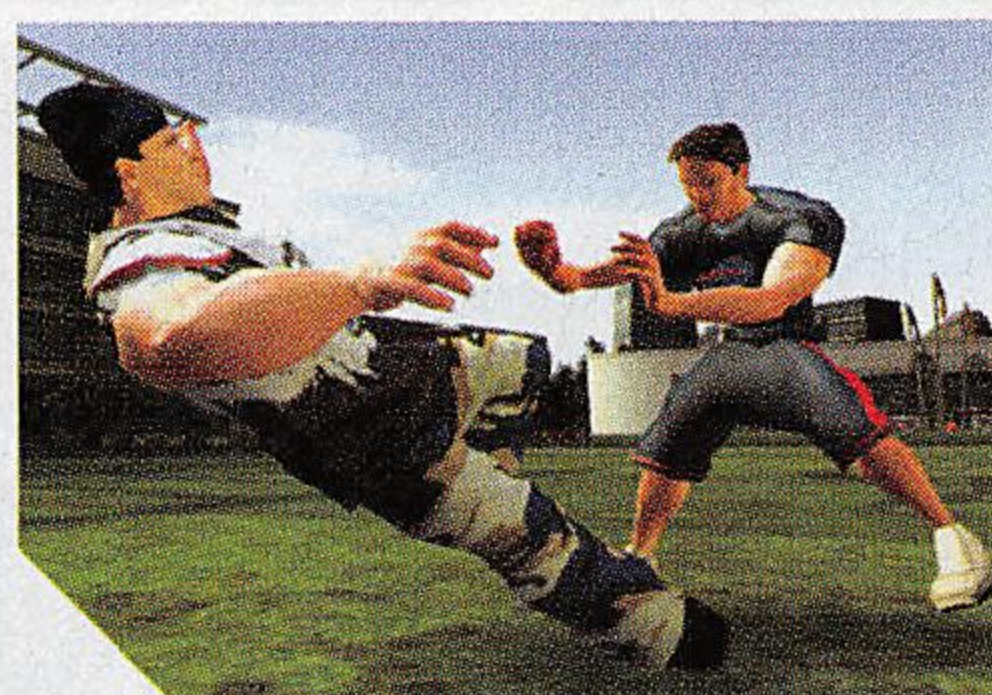
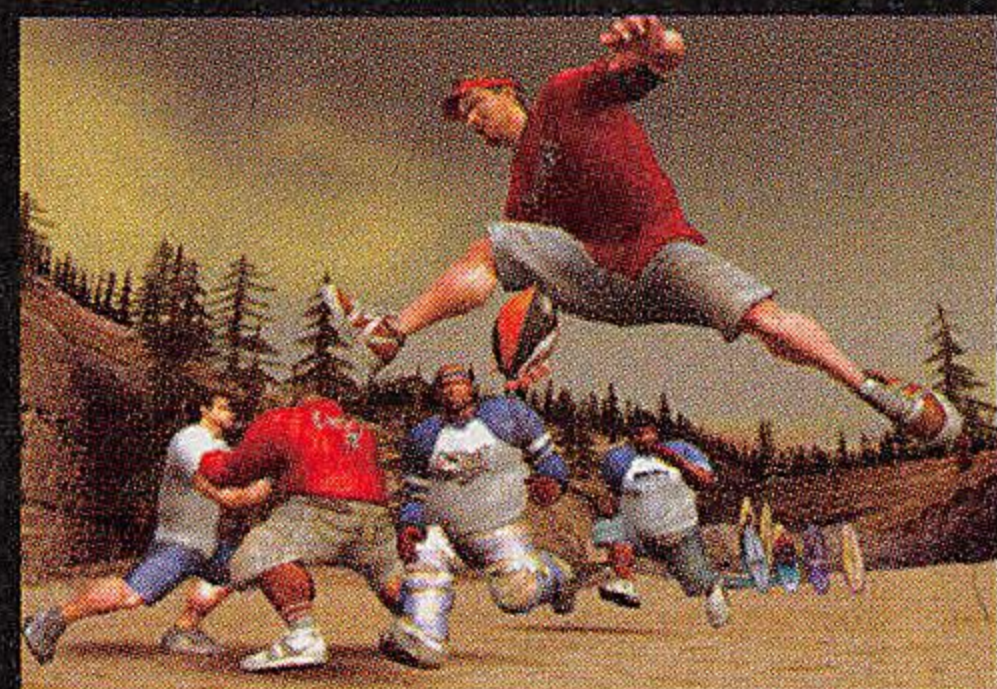
online and crush a few defensive lines.

STEPHEN FROST

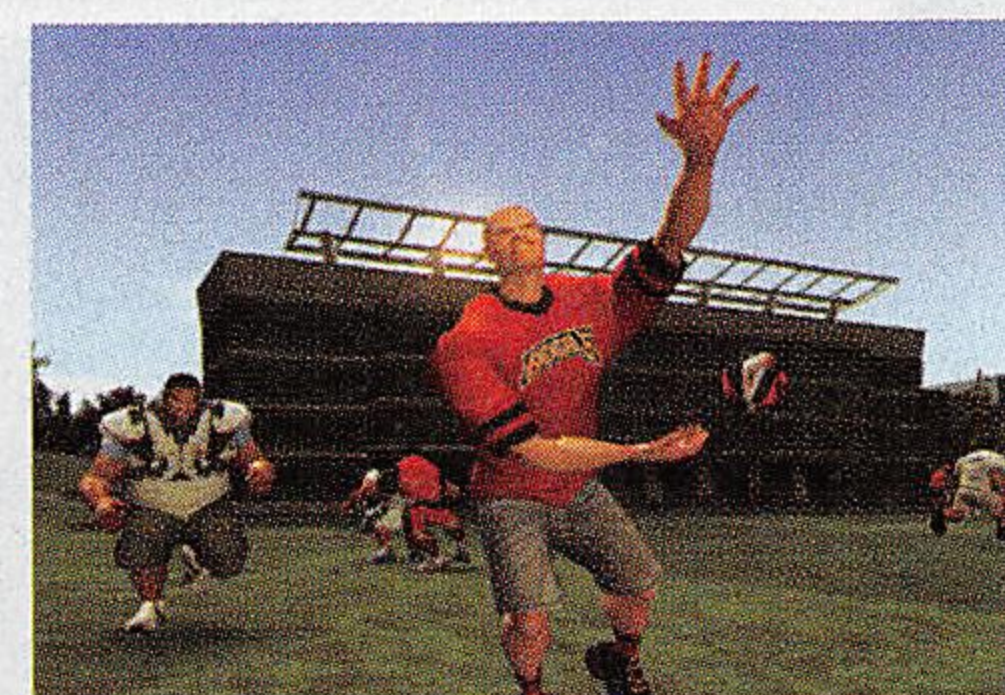
Stylin' And Profilin'

As with any *Street* game, having the highest score isn't the best way to defeat your opponent. You also have to look good doing it. Isn't that the mantra for life?

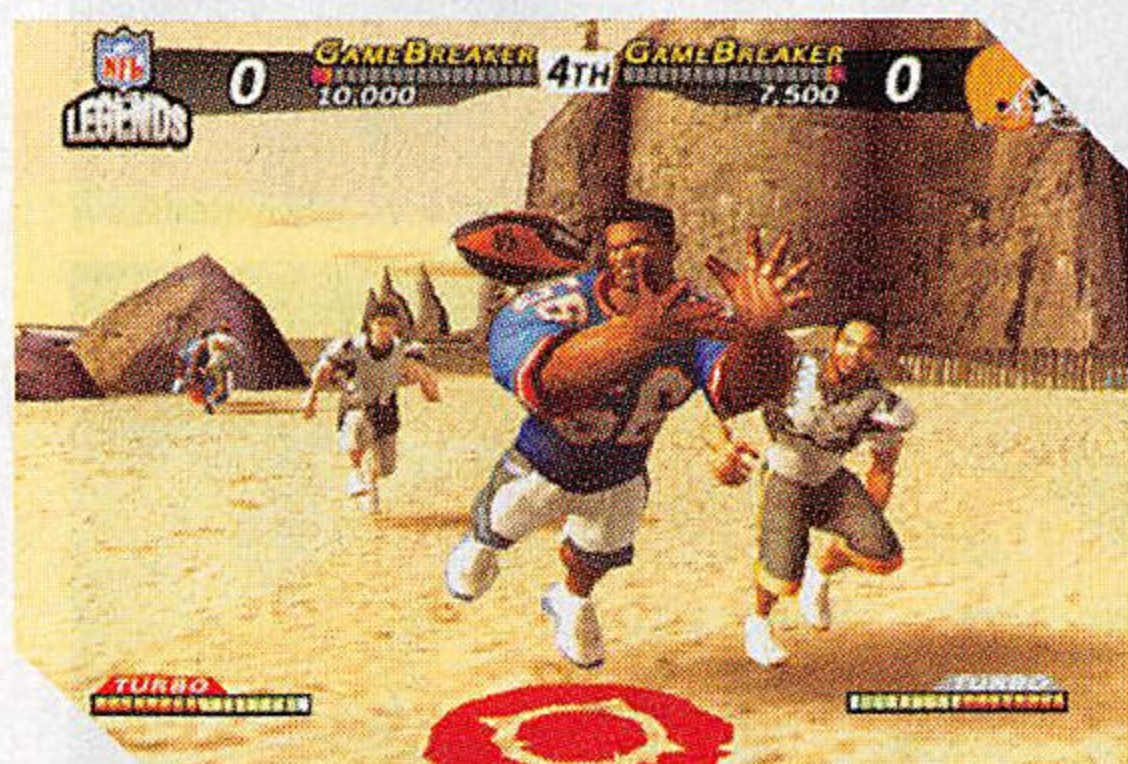
► By hitting various button combinations, you can pull off some truly fancy tricks. Under-leg passes are just the beginning.



▲ No, he's not performing some sort of Tai-chi workout. You can actually tackle people like this if you hit them right.



▲ With 14 large characters on the field at all times, the action can get pretty tense, especially playing with three of your friends.



▲ You really have to adjust your strategies from field to field, as the terrain makes a big difference in your running, catching and tackling abilities.

THE BUZZ

Not counting a few exceptions, the EA Sports Big line oozes quality and depth.

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reanimated footage from
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mobile armors from 0079,
0083, Gundam Wing, G
Gundam, Gundam Seed.
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including 2 player VS
Mode!

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a battle so epic, one universe isn't enough.*



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on



PlayStation®2

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STRATEGY

84 Tony Hawk's Underground

CODES



- 88 Backyard Wrestling
- 88 Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu
- 89 Castlevania: LDI
- 88 Conflict: Desert Storm II
- 89 Frogger's Adventures
- 89 GameShark Codes

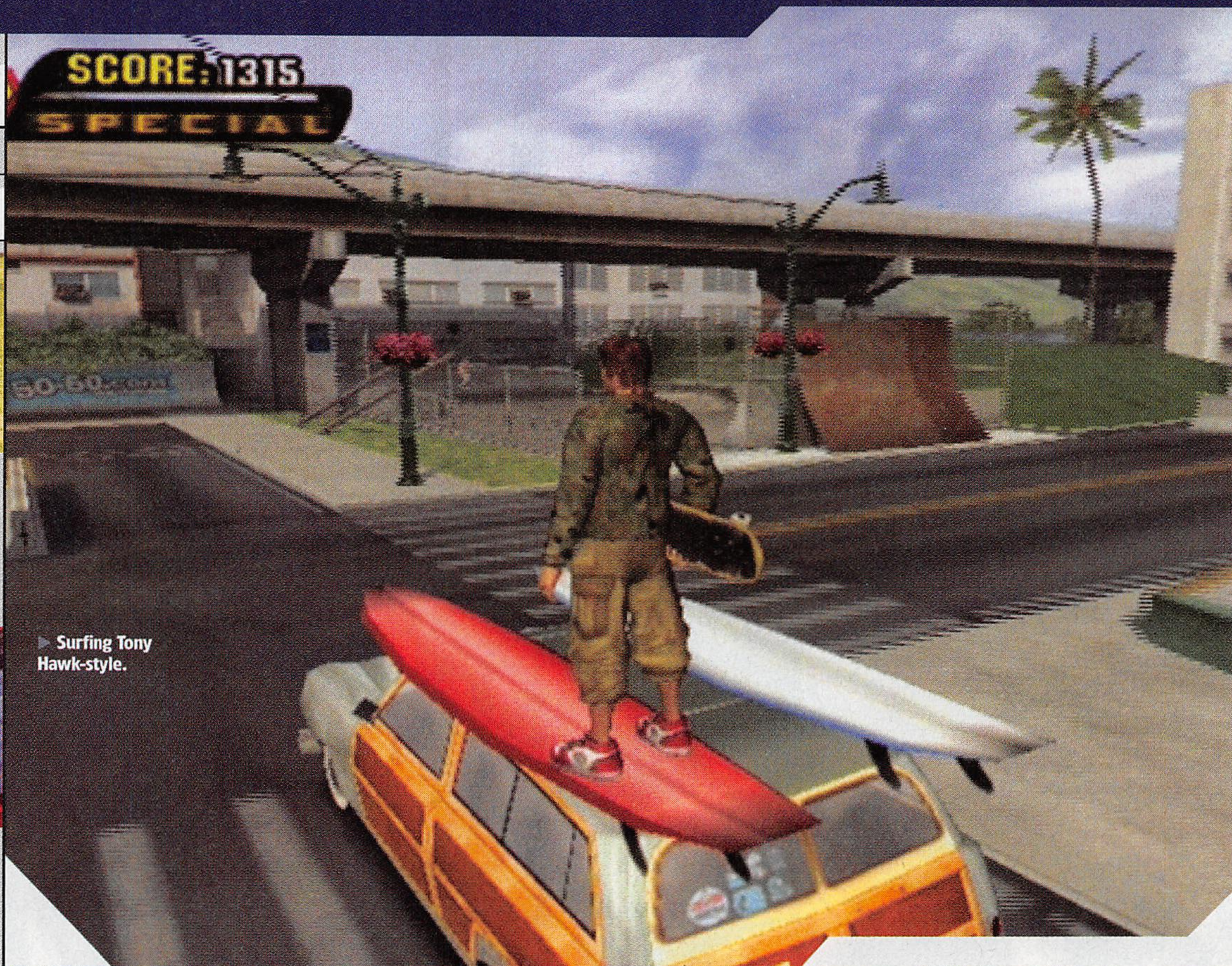
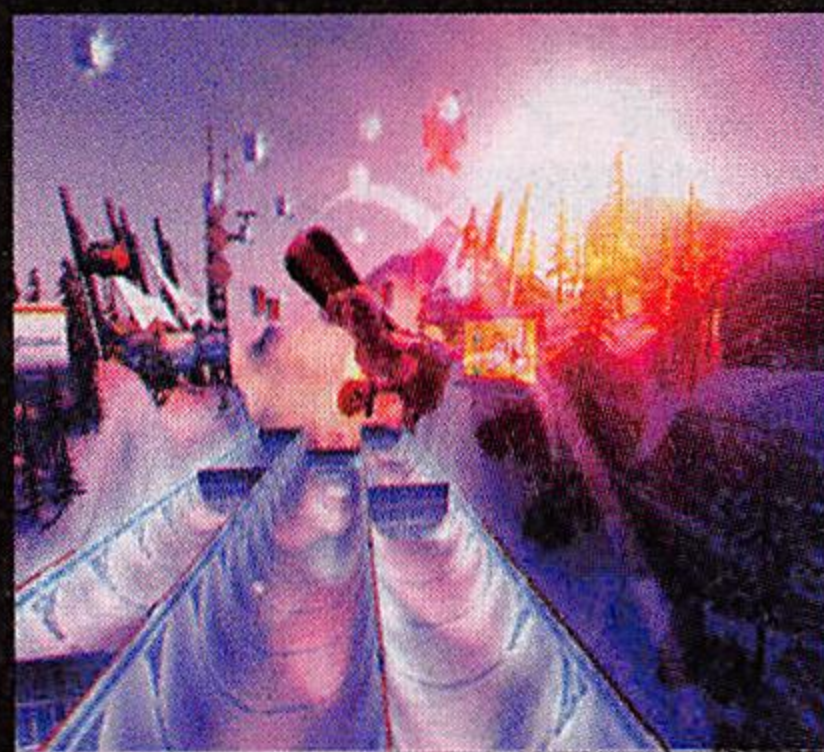


- 88 Kya: Dark Lineage
- 88 Legacy of Kain: Defiance
- 89 Megaman X7
- 89 NBA Jam
- 89 Rogue Ops
- 88 Spawn: Armageddon
- 88 SSX 3
- 88 SWAT: Global Strike Team
- 89 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

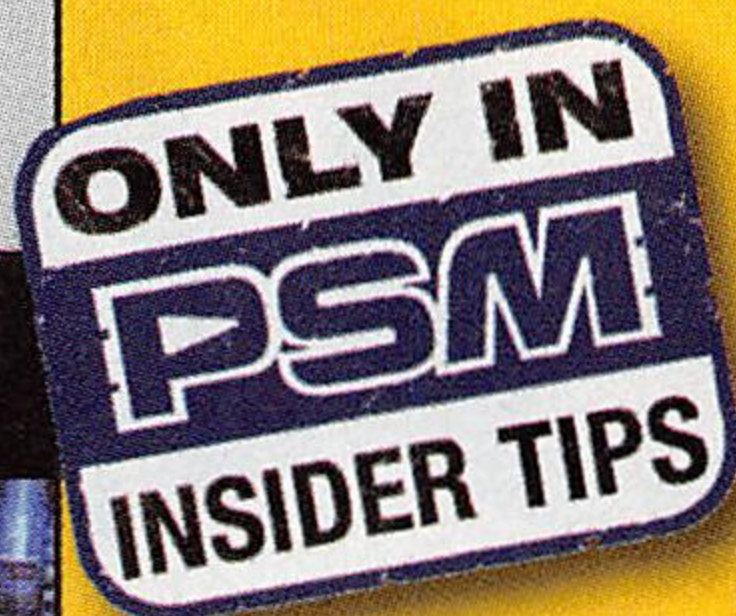
Castlevania: LDI, p. 89



SSX 3, p. 88



▶ Surfing Tony Hawk-style.



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Secrets for shredding the underground

GENERAL TIPS

UNDERGROUND TRANSPORTATION

T.H.U.G. sports more unconventional methods of traveling than any of its predecessors. In addition to running on foot and commandeering vehicles, you can jump on top of moving cars or inside freight trucks on courses like Manhattan or Tampa to get around the metropolis very quickly.

ILL SCORING

Bust out sick Flatland moves to beat any combo or point specific Story Mode goal with ease (yep, even Vert Challenges!). Just hit ↑+↓ quickly to enter a Manual, then start tapping ◎◎△ in quick succession to mix it up. You'll be busting six

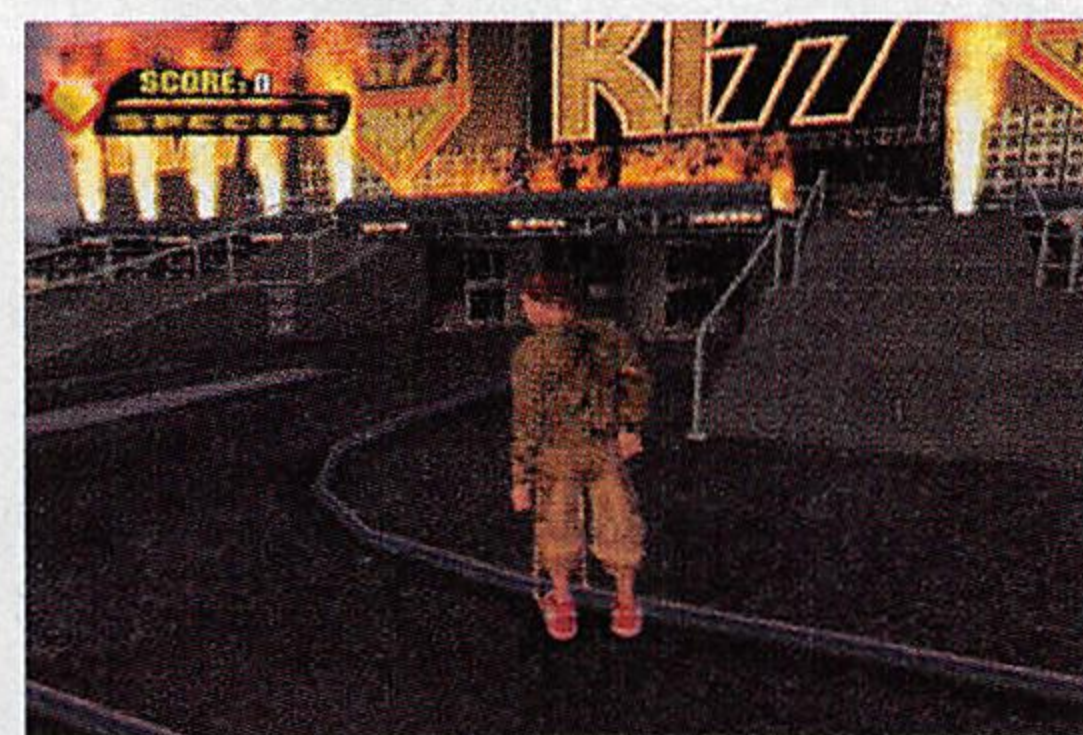
and seven figure combo scores in no time!

ROCK AND ROLL ALL NIGHT

After beating the game in any mode, you'll unlock "Hotter Than Hell" — a KISS themed concert venue course. Air out of the quarter pipes in front of the stage to grab the floating letters that spell "KISS." Do it once to score the "God of Thunder" music video. Do it twice to bring Gene Simmons and gang on stage for an in game, pyrotechnic performance of "Rock and Roll All Nite."

AD HAWK

The *Tony Hawk* series has always sported cool unlockable characters and *T.H.U.G.* is no exception. Beat Story Mode on any difficulty setting to unlock Marvel's red and yellow behemoth Iron Man.



▲ "You wanted the best, so you got the best."

Unlock KISS front man Gene Simmons by finishing Story Mode on "Normal" or "Sick" difficulty settings. Probably the weirdest character in *T.H.U.G.* is unlocked by beating the game on the "Sick" difficulty setting: T.H.U.D., the creature from the Neversoft intro FMV. Tony Hawk's Underground Dweller, no doubt?

<< You'll be busting six and seven figure combo scores in no time! >>



▲ Iron Man totally sold out when he went pro. Way to go, Stark...

Video Killed The Skateboard Star

Some joker has hidden 9 videotapes chock full of bonus footage throughout the courses in *T.H.U.G.*! Don't worry, we've got the goods. Knowing where to look is half the battle.

NEW JERSEY TAPE

The first tape in *T.H.U.G.* is hidden underneath the bridge leading from the suburbs to the train station. Head down the grass embankment on foot (L) + (R), and traverse the concrete path at the water's edge to snag the tape.

MANHATTAN TAPE

No skating necessary to grab the New York tape — it floats atop the electronic Metro Center welcome sign. Just climb the ladder, jump and grab the top of the sign (R). Pull yourself up to snake Tape # 2.

TAMPA TAPE

This one's a little tricky. Air off the quarter pipe on the parking garage next to the Kumon Inn at a slight right angle, then grind the pipe at the top of the jump (A). You should have enough momentum to carry you off the building and onto a telephone wire extending to the building across the street. Once you start to lose momentum and begin heading backwards, jump (X), hit (L) + (R) in the air, and then hit (R) again to grab the wire. Shimmy to the building across the street and pull yourself up onto the roof bowl. Double jump (X + X) over the ledge to the right and drop down in the tight gap between the two buildings. Watch out for pigeon droppings and grab the Third Secret Tape to unlock the Bails I Video footage!



▲ Tampa's Tape is one of the more difficult to attain.

SAN DIEGO TAPE

San Diego's Secret Tape is hidden on the roof of the large stage located in the pavilion area. Air up the quarter pipe located behind the main stage (near the blue Security building and chain link fence). Hit (L) + (R) in the air to land on your feet atop the second level walkway. Sky up the quarter pipe in front of the blue window to your right and grab the secret tape.

HAWAII TAPE

The Hawaiian Secret Tape floats high atop a wire extending between the two waterfront hotels. Air up to the second floor of the white hotel from the street (X) off the quarter pipe across from Tasty Burger, then (L) + (R) to land on the second story edge). Climb the ladder to the wire hanging over the hotel entrance. Jump, grab the wire (R), then shimmy to the hotel roof and pull yourself up. Once on the roof, skate towards the pink hotel in the distance, and veer right just as you approach the ramp at the edge. Ollie and grind (X), then (A) the wire stretching between the two hotels to grab the secret tape.



▲ Grind the wire on the other side of the ramp to grab Tape #5.

VANCOUVER TAPE

It'll take an epic Spine Transfer to grab Vancouver's Tape. Head towards the glass dome located above the hockey rink (Don't mistake it for the other glass dome on this level!). Notice the glass pagoda over the walkway leading down to the rink. Skitch a car on the adjacent road to build up



enough speed to air up the pagoda quarter pipe, spine transfer the glass roof (L in the air) and leap off the roof ledge (X) towards the circle of flags around the dome. If you time it just right, you'll snatch Secret Tape # 6 from the air above the dome and unlock the Bails II Video footage.

SLAM CITY JAM TAPE

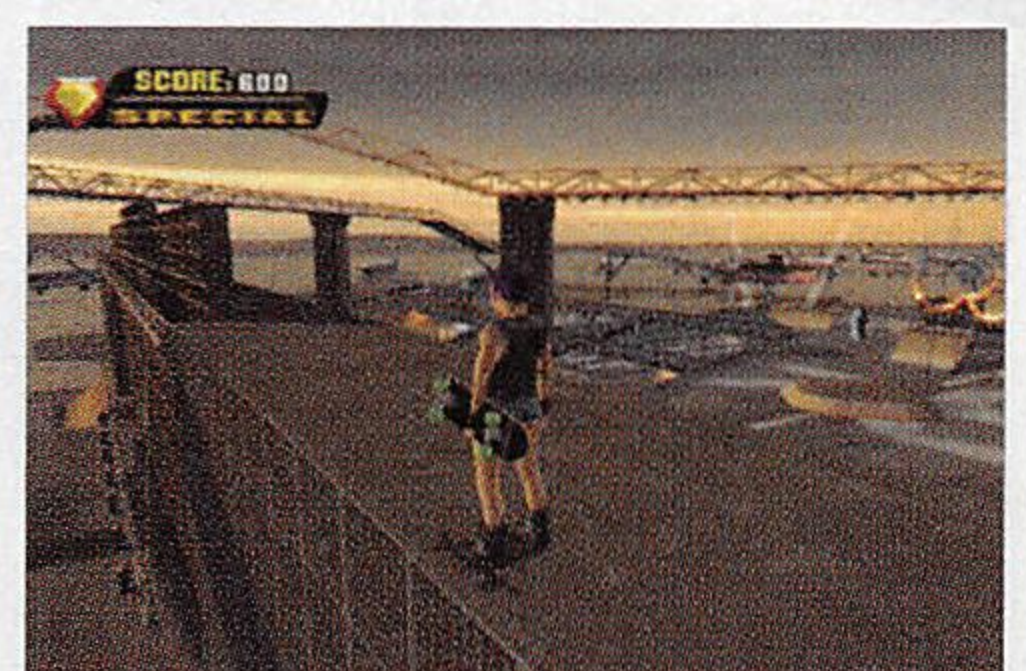
Time to shatter some records... literally. The Slam City Jam Secret Tape is hidden inside the electronic scoreboard atop the massive arena. Sky out of the large half pipe near the entrance (at a slight angle), then grind (A) the circular catwalk above the street course. Ride out the rail until you smash through the scoreboard and grab the secret tape.

MOSCOW TAPE

Moscow's Secret Tape can be reached completely on foot. Head to the red Kremlin-looking cathedral near the army tanks. Climb the cathedral by double jumping (X) twice) and grabbing (R). Once you're atop the cathedral walkway, head behind one of the towers to grab Secret Tape #8.

HOTTER THAN HELL TAPE

Snaking Hotter Than Hell's Secret Tape will take all of your skills as it floats high above the KISS stage and is uber difficult to attain. Boneless (↑↑X) out of the quarter pipe behind the left side of the stage, hit (L) + (R) in the air, and then (R) again to grab the side of the black ledge. Pull yourself onto the ledge and square yourself up with the raised step to your left. Jump on your board (L + R), then ollie (X), grind the step (A) and air out of the step ramp (X) to snag the final Secret Tape and unlock "Always Hard," a painful behind-the-scenes video by Neversoft.



▲ Grind the raised step to snag Tape #9.

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"Old Skool"-ing The Competition

There are three *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* courses to unlock in *T.H.U.G.* Here's the 411 on how to snag them.

OLD SKOOL COURSE: School II

WHERE IS IT? A precarious ledge in the Jersey Train Station.

HOW DO I GET IT? After dealing with the security guard, air onto the hospital entrance overhang with the quarter pipe located behind the center road divider (⊗), then (□+□). Jump to the next ledge and follow it to the left into the train station. Grab the Old-Skool Icon then Acid Drop (hold □ and walk off the ledge) into the lower quarter pipe for some extra style. Look out below!

OLD SKOOL COURSE: Venice Beach

WHERE IS IT? Inside an evil tiki statue in Hawaii.

HOW DO I GET IT? Head away from the beach, towards the closed movie theater near the back of the map. Once you find the wooden tiki with the glowing eyes, ollie (⊗) through his mouth. If you hit the tiki's piehole just right, you'll be transported to a flaming tunnel. Ollie off the end of the tunnel (before the drop off) to snag the Old Skool Icon.

OLD SKOOL COURSE: Hangar

WHERE IS IT? A secret room in Moscow.

HOW DO I GET IT? Skate towards Lenin's Tomb (the square, tan building near the army tanks marked with Cyrillic letters). Climb on top of the building (□+□), then □ to pull yourself up. Once on the roof, skate towards the adjacent red building and leap (⊗) through the large second story window to the right of the entrance. Head upstairs to snag the Old Skool Icon floating next to the painting of Lenin hanging loose. Shaka' comrade!

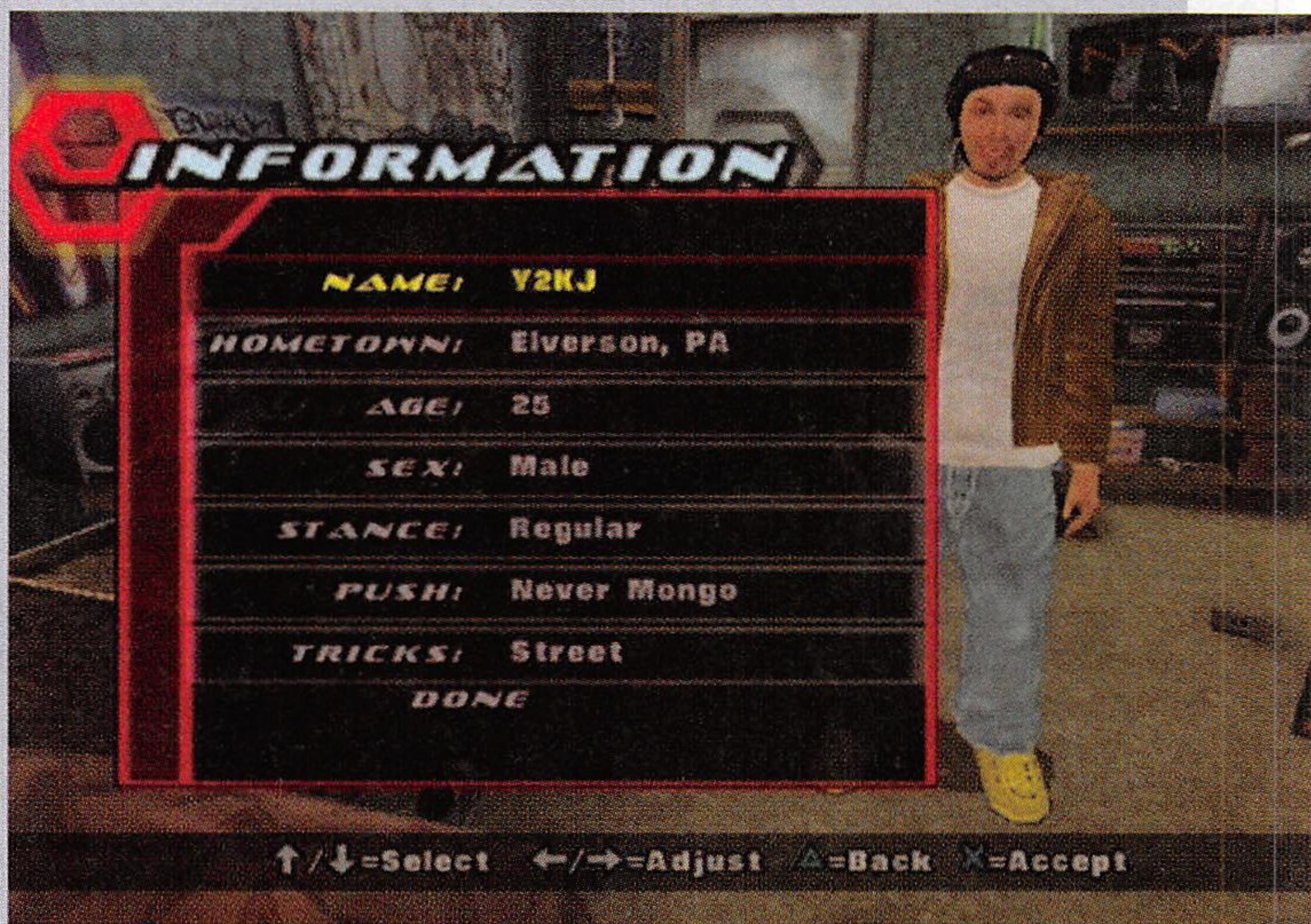


▲ "Hmmm... I wonder if that's the large second story window PSM was talking about?"

Play As Neversoft

The twisted guys at Neversoft programmed their development team into playable characters! Unlock these nine Neversoft T.H.U.G.s by entering their code name into the Skater Information Screen in "Create-A-Skater."

CODE NAME	WHO IS THIS?
Skillzombie	Aaron Skillman - Development
leedsleedsleeds	Chris Ward - Development
TOPBLOKE	Dave Cowling - Development
sik	Kurt Gutierrez - Development
deadendroad	Ralph D'Amato - Development
The Kraken	Steve Ganem - Development
Hammer	Ted Barber - Development
WOODCHUCK	Michelle Deyo - Tester
Y2KJ	Jesse Shannon - Tester



▲ Play as Jesse, the diehard tester who loses his front teeth in the credits!

SICK CHEATS

Enter these codes into the Cheats screen in the *T.H.U.G.* Options menu, and then select them in-game if you need a little help. A thunder clap will sound if you enter the codes correctly.

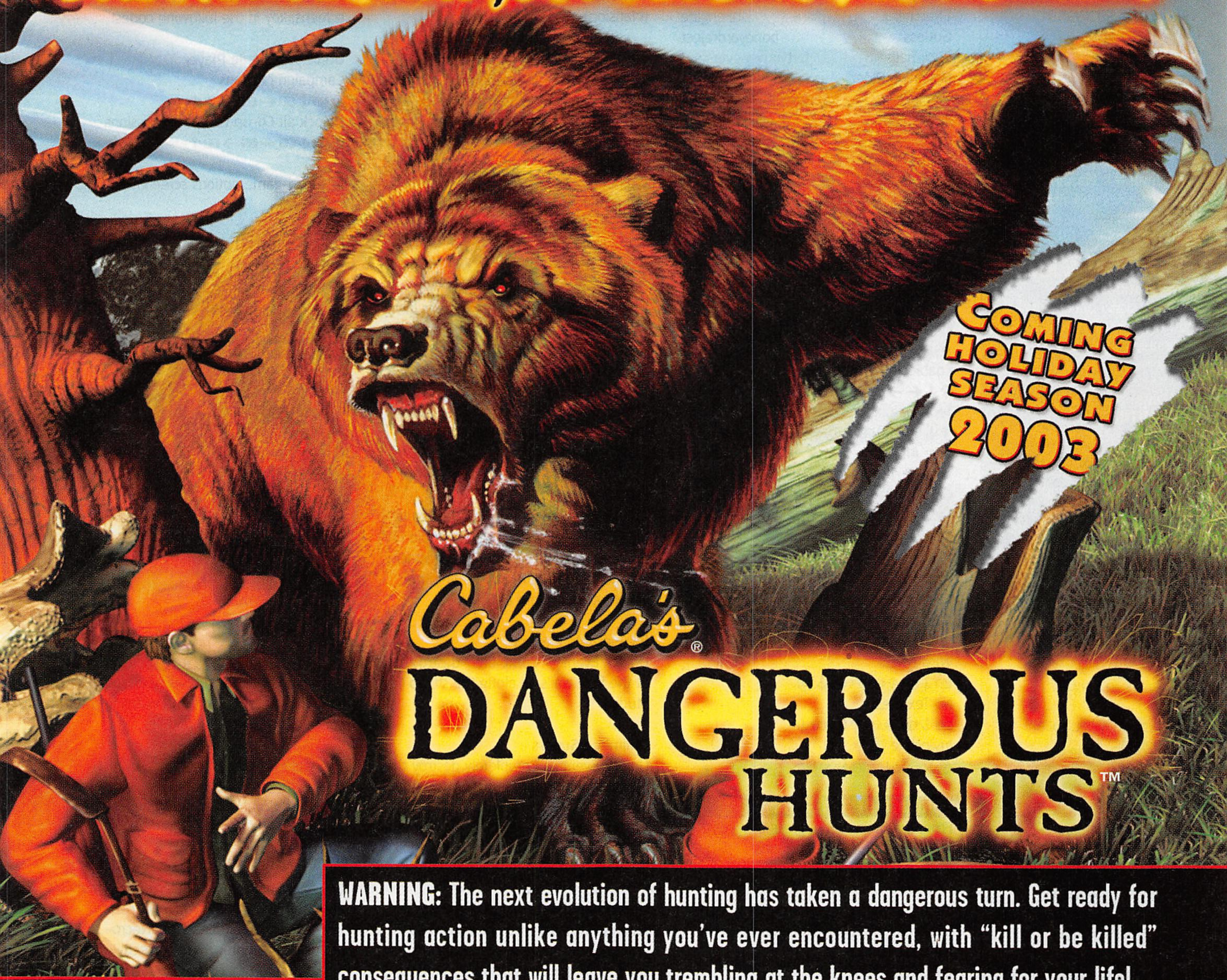
CODE	CHEAT
letitslide	Flawless rails
keepitsteady	flawless manuals
getitup	Play with Moon gravity
digivid	Unlock all FMV sequences



► Will you be able to give Tony Hawk a run for the money?



THE HUNTER HAS JUST BECOME THE HUNTED!



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HOLIDAY
SEASON
2003**

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**DANGEROUS
HUNTS™**

WARNING: The next evolution of hunting has taken a dangerous turn. Get ready for hunting action unlike anything you've ever encountered, with "kill or be killed" consequences that will leave you trembling at the knees and fearing for your life!



PlayStation®2

ACTIVISION®



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TAKE THE PSM CHALLENGE!

RULES You can't send an entry for each challenge. If you cheat or use codes, you'll be disqualified. The final letter for the contest will be accepted on February 1st. If there are multiple winners, the final winner will be decided by the best paragraph that explains why you're the winner. Send a picture or a videotape (non-returnable) and a short paragraph explaining why you're the winner. Sorry, no e-mail entries! This contest is open only to readers living in the United States, age 18 years or older. PSM reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or greater monetary value, if necessary.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO:
PSM January Challenge #
(the challenge you're entering)
c/o Future Network USA,
150 North Hill Drive,
Brisbane, CA 94005.

THE CHALLENGES

Challenge #1: Manhunt

Finish the game on Fetish Mode with a four-star rating in each scene, for a total of 80 stars.

Challenge #2: Tony Hawk's Underground

Using any skater and any board, show us your sickest trick in single player mode. Highest score wins.

Challenge #3: .hack//QUARANTINE

This one's easy: just finish the game. Only the truly stout-hearted will have finished all four games, and only the most savvy players could get through this one without playing the others.

THIS MONTH'S PRIZE PACKAGE

Kya game
The Sims Bustin' Out game
Soundtrack to Backyard Wrestling
Nyko AirFlo EX controller



OCTOBER WINNERS

Soul Calibur 2
Tim Aderdroth, Saranac Lake, NY

Disgaea
Dave Monteforte,
East Stroudsburg, PA

Splashdown
Doug Richards, Baltimore, MD

CODES

SSX 3

Find the codes section in the options menu and unlock these hidden riders.

Marty	back2future
Hiro	slicksuit
Brodi	zenmaster
Jurgen	brokenleg
Svelte Luther	notsosvelte
Stretch	windmilkdunk
Cudmore	milkemdaisy
Bunny San	wheresyourtail
Churchill	tankengine
Gutless	boneyardreject
Snowballs	betyouveneverseen
Unknown Rider	finallymadeitin
Canhuck	greatwhitenorth
NW Legend	callhimgeorge
Unlock Peak 2	midstationexpress
Unlock Peak 3	biggerthank7
Unlock all music tracks	djsuperstar

LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE

Pause the game, then enter the following codes – using the D-pad for directions – and hit **START** to activate the cheat.

Fill 'er Up
← → ← → **RT RT** **○** **△** ↓
Enable Tube
↑ ↓ ← → **RT RT** **△** ↓ **○**
Toon Graphics
↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ **RT RT** ↓ **○** **△**
Give All Ups
← ← ↑ ↑ **RT RT** **○** ↓ **△**
Give All Slams
→ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ **RT** **△** **○** ↓
Infinite Reaver Charge
↓ ↓ ↑ ← **RT RT** ↓ **△** **○**
All Dark Chronicles
RT ↓ **RT RT** → **RT** **△** ↓ **RT**
All Bonuses
RT ↓ **RT RT** ← **RT** ↓ **RT** **△**
Wire-frame
RT ↓ **RT** ↑ **RT RT** ↓ **△**
No Textures
RT ↓ **RT** → **RT** ↑ **△** **RT** ↓
Invincible
↑ ↓ → ↓ **RT RT** ↓ **△** **RT**

CONFLICT: DESERT STORM II

From the main menu, press the following sequence of buttons
RT RT RT RT **○** **○** **△** **△** **○** **○**

Then head into the options/cheat menu to access the following cheats:
INFINITE SAVES
INFINITE AMMO
TROOPER LEVEL (Wingman AI)
ENEMY LEVEL = 0 (stupid enemies)
MISSION LIST
NEXT MISSION

KYA: DARK LINEAGE

To be used in the main menu:
Open bonus gallery (can be used multiple times) **△** **↑** **○** → ↓ ↓ **○** ←

To be used in the pause menu:

Shrink Jamgut
RT RT **○** **RT RT RT** ← **RT** **△**
Restore Life
RT RT RT RT ↑ ↑ ← **○** → **○** **START**

BACKYARD WRESTLING

To Unlock the Cheat Menu

From the main menu, hold down **RT** and press: **○** **△** **○** **△** **○**

Big Head

Unlock Event — Slam, Grapple, or Jump
Onto your opponent into the flaming table. The table must be on fire first. (Mansion)

Big Hands

Unlock Event — Have the manager attack and hurt someone after getting the fan blades bloody (hit the fan blades twice) (Slaughter House)

Big Feet

Unlock Event — Have the biker (ollie) attack and hit somebody after you have lit the hay on fire (Truck Stop)

Halo

Unlock Event — Slam, Grapple, or Jump
Onto your opponent into the flaming mattress. The mattress must be on fire first. (Backyard)

Greyscale

Unlock Event — Completely destroy BOTH aquariums (Stripclub)

Hardcore

Unlock Event — Completely destroy all of the fake walls all along the studio (TV Studio). Have the security guard attack and hurt the AI after completing the above event in Hard difficulty.

Invulnerable Players

Unlock Event — Completely destroy all of the fake walls all along the studio (TV Studio)

Unlimited Supers

Unlock Event — Completely destroy the SUV (hit all three sections TWICE) (Mall)

Wireframe

Unlock Event — Cause the Tiki bar to Blow up (Mansion)

Unlocking Cheats with CAW Names

As an Alternative, the cheats can be unlocked by creating CAW wrestlers with the following names. (Names are case insensitive)

Toon Character	pstapley
Toon Backgrounds	mbilodeau
Toon Backgrounds	mstapley
Big Head	rtaylor
Big Hands	okendall
Big Feet	tpiperi
Halo	jgintu

Ghost	pjefferies
Greyscale	ksimeonov
Wireframe	ewilliams
First Person Camera	edma
Player One Invulnerable	jche
Player Two Invulnerable	cbarlow
Invulnerable Players	denicholas
Player One Unlimited Supers	ddaniels
Player Two Unlimited Supers	jmaxwell
Hardcore AI	aiton
Hardcore AI	stomanovski
Unlocks All Cheats	donttrythisathome

SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

At the corresponding "Mission Select" screens, key in the following codes:

Unlock all Single Player

Campaign Missions

↑ **RT** ↓ **RT** ← **RT** → **RT** ↑

Unlock all Co-op Campaign Missions

↑ **RT** ↓ **RT** ← **RT** → **RT** ↑

At the in-game options screen (Press **START** to access)

Invulnerable

↑ ↓ ← → **RT RT**

Infinite Ammo

← → ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ **RT RT**

TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU

Pause the game, and enter the following:

Unlock Everything

← → **○** **○** **○** **○** ← →

All Plants

○ **△** **○** ← **↑** → ↓ ↓

All Yorbels

↑ **△** ← **○** → **○** ↓ ↑

All Moonstones

△ **△** **○** **○** **○** **○** ← →

100 Feathers

○ **△** **○** **○** **△** **○** **○** **△**

All Juju Powerups

↑ → ← ↓ **△** **○** **○** ↓

BATMAN: RIZE OF SIN TZU

Codes are entered by holding all four shoulder buttons down and entering the codes using the digital pad.

Unlimited Health

↑ → ↓ ← ↑ ← ↓ →

Unlimited Combo Meter

← → ↑ ↓ → ← ↓ ↑

SPAWN: ARMAGEDDON

Codes are entered by pausing the game and using the D-pad. You'll hear the words "Necro-goodness" or "Necro-licious" if you enter them correctly.

All Weapons

↑ ↓ ← → ← → ← ←

Infinite Ammo

↑ ↓ ← → ↑ ← ↓ →

Infinite Necroplasm

↑ ↓ ← → ↓ ← ↑ →

No Blood

↑ ↓ ← → ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

Open all Missions

↑↓←→←→→→
Open Encyclopedia
↑↓←→←→↑↓
Open all Comics
↑↓←→→←←↑

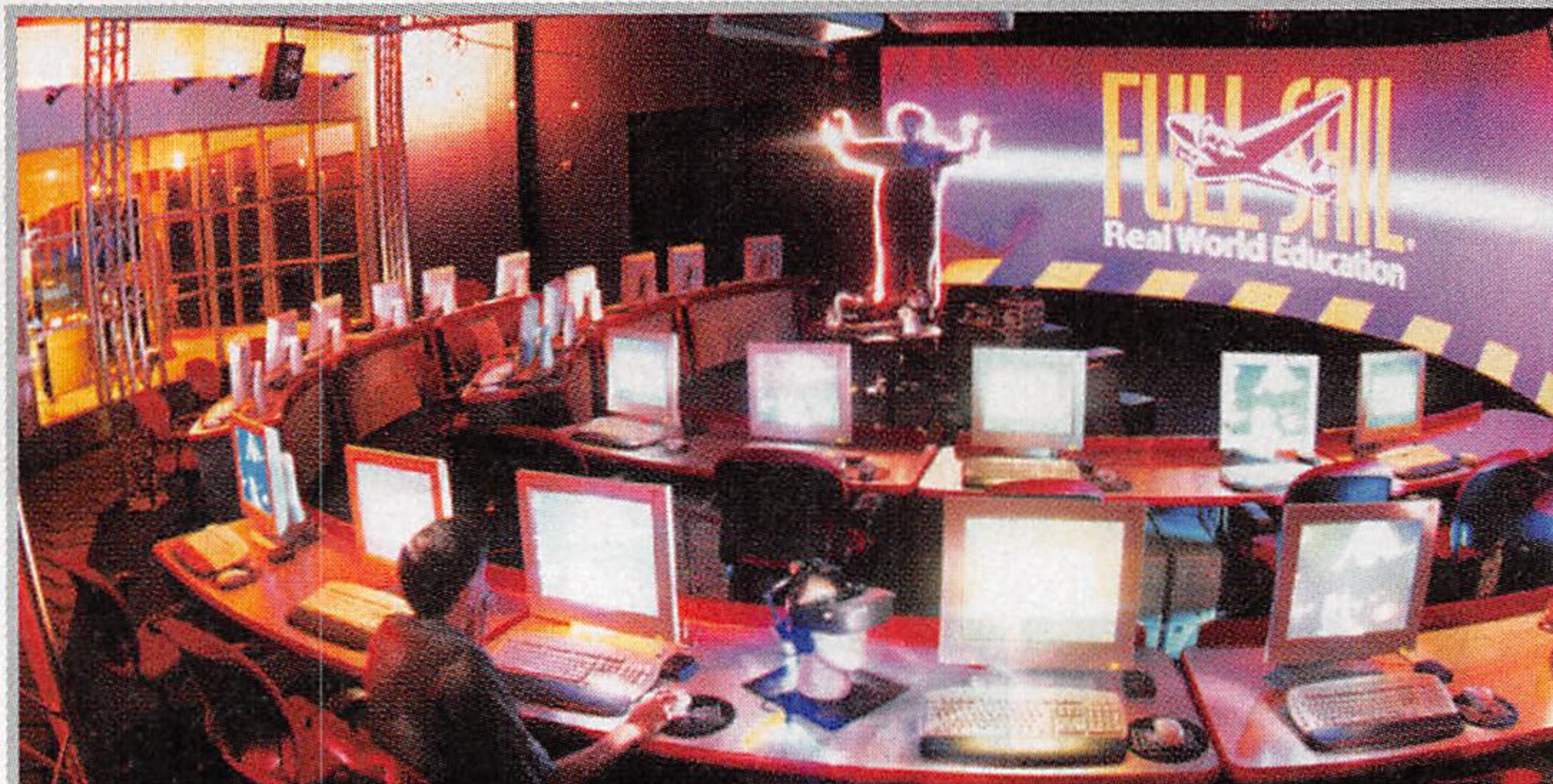
FROGGER'S ADVENTURES: THE RESCUE

99 Lives
Pause the game, then press
↑↑↓↓←→←→ L1 R1

ROGUE OPS

One Hit Kill
○←→→←○ L2 R2 ○ ○ ○
Half Damage
○ ○ ○ ○ ←←→→ ○ ○ ○ ○
No Bullet Damage
←→→←○ ○ ○ ○
Unlimited Bullets
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ←○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Unlimited Life
←→→←←→→←←→→←
○ ○
Big Feet
→→→←←→←←←←
Unlimited TOC
○ ○ ○ ○ ←→→← L2 R2 L2
Explosive Sniper
L2 R2 →→←←→→ R2 L2 ○ ○

Explosive Crossbow
←→→←○ ○ L2 R2 ○ ○ ←→
Missile Sniper
○ ←→ L2 R2 →○ R2 R2 L2 ←←
Missile Crossbow
→→←← L2 L2 R2 R2 ○ ○ ○ ○
Unlimited Spy Cam
←←→→ R2 R2 L2 L2 ○ ○ ○ ○
Big Gun
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Level Skip
L2 ○ L2 ○ L2 ← L2 → L2 R2 R2 ○
R2 ○ R2 ← R2 → ○
Finish Training
←→→←○ ○ R2 L2 ○ ○ ○
Finish Carmen
R2 L2 →←← L2 R2 ○ ○ ○ R2
Finish Museum
L2 L2 →→→ L2 R2 ○ R2 ○ R2
Finish Silo
R2 L2 →←← L2 ○ R2 ○ ○ ○
Finish Magyar
R2 ○ ○ ←← L2 R2 →○ →→
Finish Bank
R2 L2 ○ ○ ← R2 ←←○ ○ ○
Finish Reliance
R2 L2 →← R2 L2 →○ ○ ○ ○
Finish Mod
R2 L2 → R2 ←○ R2 ○ →→←
Finish Installation K
R2 L2 ○ ○ ← L2 L2 ○ ○ L1 ○



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GameShark Codes

Megaman X7

[M] Must Be On

F450BE2E
76740416

PSM EXCLUSIVE CODE

Invincibility!
04909168
9C70D5EA

Character Codes:

Axl: Have All
Specials And
Weapons
240FCBD6
C9CB9C43
24009B76
9DF89C62

Character Codes:

Zero: Have All
Specials And
Weapons
240FE9D6
C94B8CC3
2400B976
9D788CE2

Character Codes:

Megaman: Have
All Specials And

Weapons

240FC8D6
C94B8E03
24009876
9D788E22

Castlevania: Lament Of Innocence

[M] Must Be On

945591BC
D932C82A

Infinite: HP
25D795E8
00A4551C
25D7B6E8
0024550C

Infinite: MP

25D0B778
1434151C
25D0B778
1434152C

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

[M] Must Be On

949197B8
94661924

Infinite: Health

24D196AA
3E97C1DC
24D196AA
BE97C1FD

Infinite: Throwing Items

24D01428
36B4C1CC

Unlock: All Characters

254F6896
CBCB1E47

NBA Jam

[M] Must Be On

F450BE1E
36744416

Infinite Jam Meter Player 1

24D193A8
2495D39D

Infinite Jam Meter Player 2

24D011E8
80D5578D



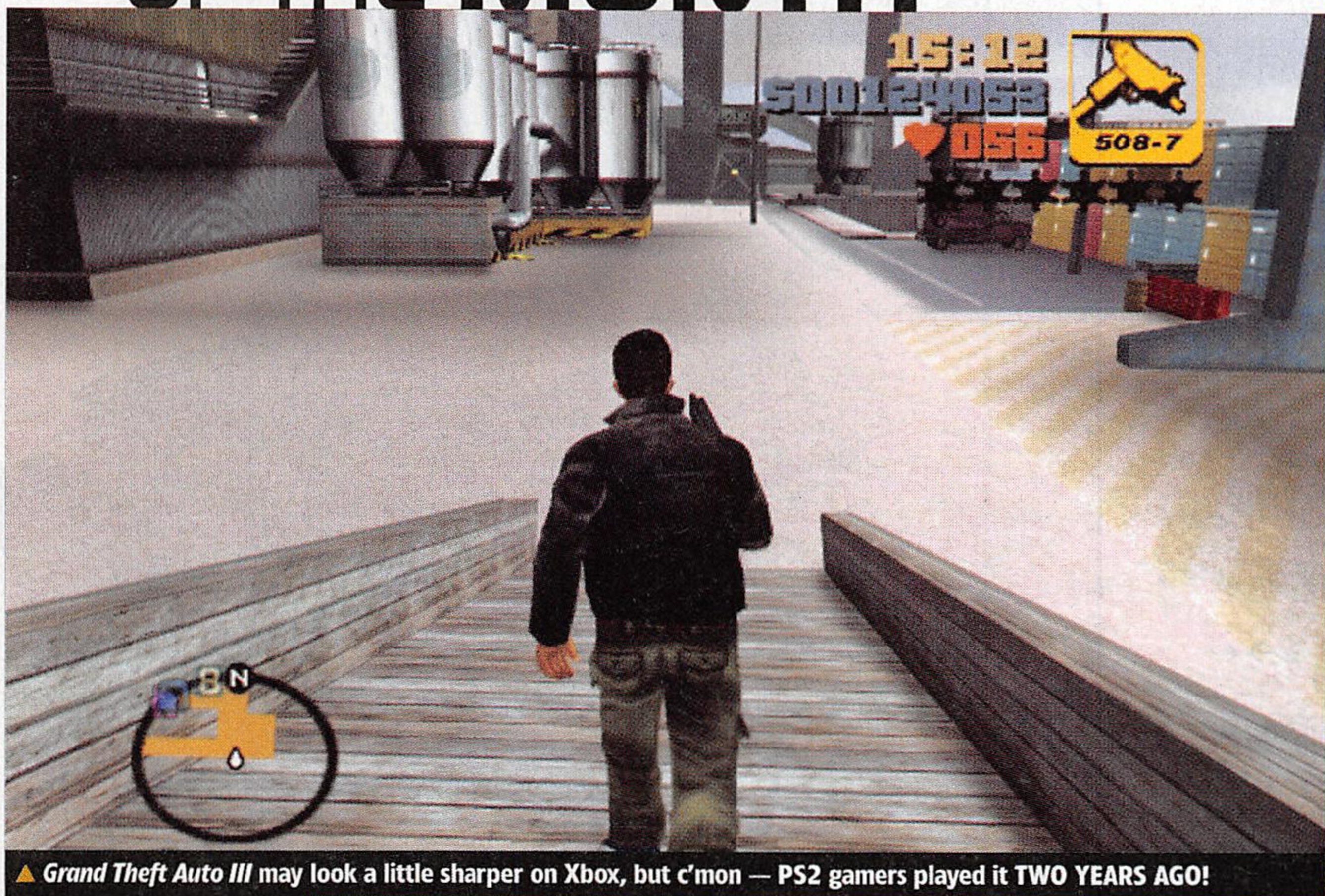
PSM Letters
c/o Future Network USA

150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA, 94005 USA



E-mail:
psm@futurenetworkusa.com

LETTER OF THE MONTH



▲ *Grand Theft Auto III* may look a little sharper on Xbox, but c'mon — PS2 gamers played it TWO YEARS AGO!

RANDY'S TIP OF THE MONTH: "I'm normally full of advice, but this month I think we could all learn some things from *Parappa the Rapper*. For instance, repeating everything people say back to them isn't annoying — it's the only way to get ahead in life. Cakes made with fish are also proven to be the best way to win over your girl/boyfriend, and you should never, ever trust anything you buy from a frog at a flea market. I think we'll all be better off if we keep these things in mind."

I am writing to tell you that my years of gaming are coming to an end. Just today, I found out that *Grand Theft Auto 3* and *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* have gone over to Xbox. This has made me realize one thing: there is no reason to be proud of owning one particular system, since they all get the same games. Plus, as a PS2-only owner, I am nothing more than a marketing research tool used to help companies decide which games can come out on other systems, with better features and updates. One year ago, I gave Rockstar my money to help games like *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* break sales. How am I rewarded? I'm not. No, the rewards go to all the Xbox owners who begged and pleaded for games that matched the overall quality of PlayStation 2's massive library. So, I ask the PSM staff to give me one reason to go on with gaming and prove that I am not just a toy for the entire industry to mess around with.

Rick Oliver, roliver779@comcast.net

CHRIS One reason to keep playing games, huh? How about the fact that they're *fun*? Seriously Rick, I think you're taking things a bit too personal, here. Sure, Xbox owners may be getting their *GTA* games with just a wee bit more mustard, but don't forget the fact that they're getting them *years* after PS2 players were already done with 'em. Anyway, even if every game came out for every system at the same time, what would be the big deal? I love my PS2, but what I really care about are the *games*.

Yes, this is a business and you won't always like what publishers will do to make a buck, but it's still a business built around *fun*. If you're looking for something to be proud of, just take pride in your hobby — be proud of being a *game player*.



▲ Most of the PSM staff like spinning around in a circle real fast. Some, however, lose their lunch...

Boot Hill

I am just wondering what happened to the game *Gunslinger*? Apparently, Sony has picked up the project from Activision, but that was a long time ago and there has been no news since. I was wondering if the project is still in progress, was scrapped or has already come on to the market with a limited distribution. I would appreciate any info that would help me.

Jordan Meyer, luciedx@hotmail.com

RANDY *Gunslinger* and *Red Dead Revolver* met in the middle of town at high noon. They both drew their guns, and shot each other dead on the spot. Well, maybe it didn't happen in quite such a dramatic fashion, but the bottom line is both games are pushing up daisies, Jordan.

Get The Raid

Are "buggy" games becoming a trend now? And why do developers just lash out a game without testing it thoroughly? Based on your gaming experience, what is the most "buggy" game your team ever encountered?

Myko Viernes, vmyk13@hotmail.com

STEVE Well, if you ask any developer, they would certainly wish that their titles were completely bug free. However, in a world

TalkBACK

EACH MONTH we post a new question on our website at psmonline.com, and print the best answers here in our Letters section. Give PSM a piece of your mind!

This Month's Question: "Which game(s) got you to buy a PlayStation 2, and why?"

At the time, it was all about *Metal Gear Solid 2*. I got my PS2 just to play that game. I was blown away on every level. I never played a game like that ever.

Jesse Hicks, Dayton, OH

Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, because I always wanted to be an elf.

Travis James, APO, AE

Madden2002, *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Devil May Cry*, and *Grand Theft Auto 3*. I got them all at the same time as my PS2 as a Christmas gift to myself. That was the best possible reward I could think of for being such a good boy. Santa would have done the same thing.

Roderick Banks, Brooklyn, NY

I really love my PS2, but only for *Final Fantasy* would I cough up \$200 for a videogame console.

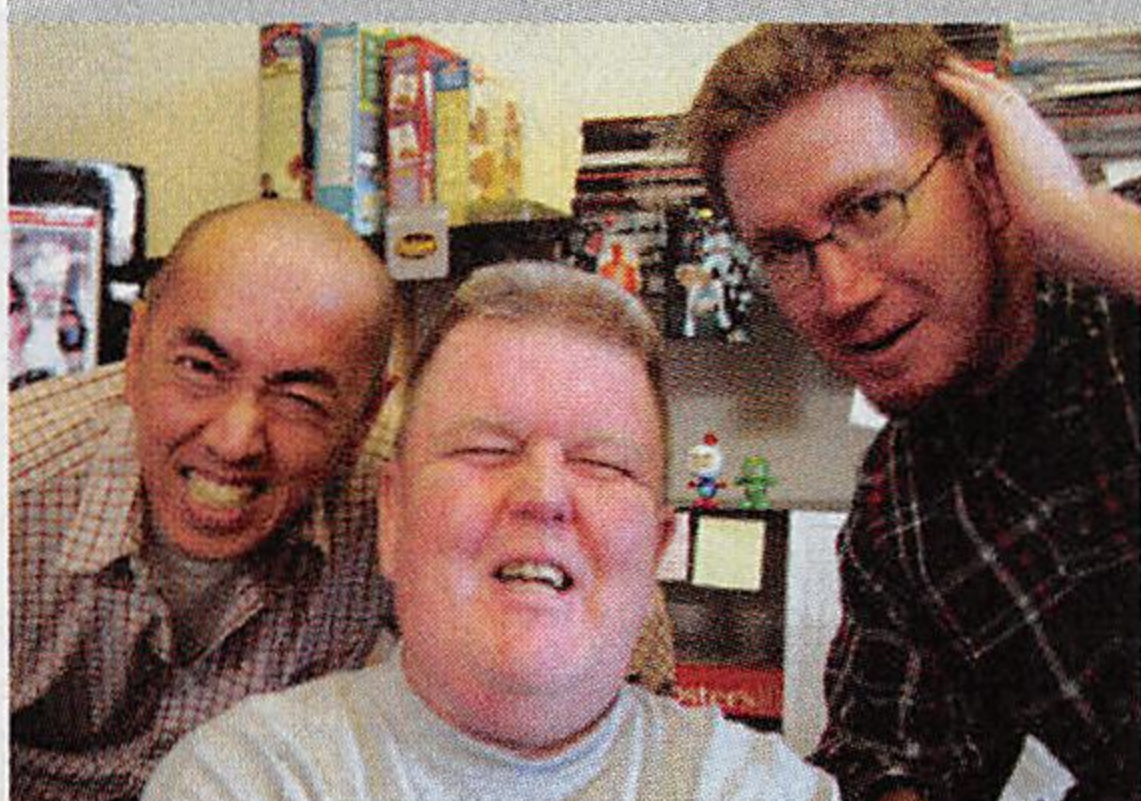
Keegan Ringle, North Judson, IN

I bought my PS2 for *Ecco The Dolphin*. Man, did I make a mistake. Good thing I rented that before I bought it.

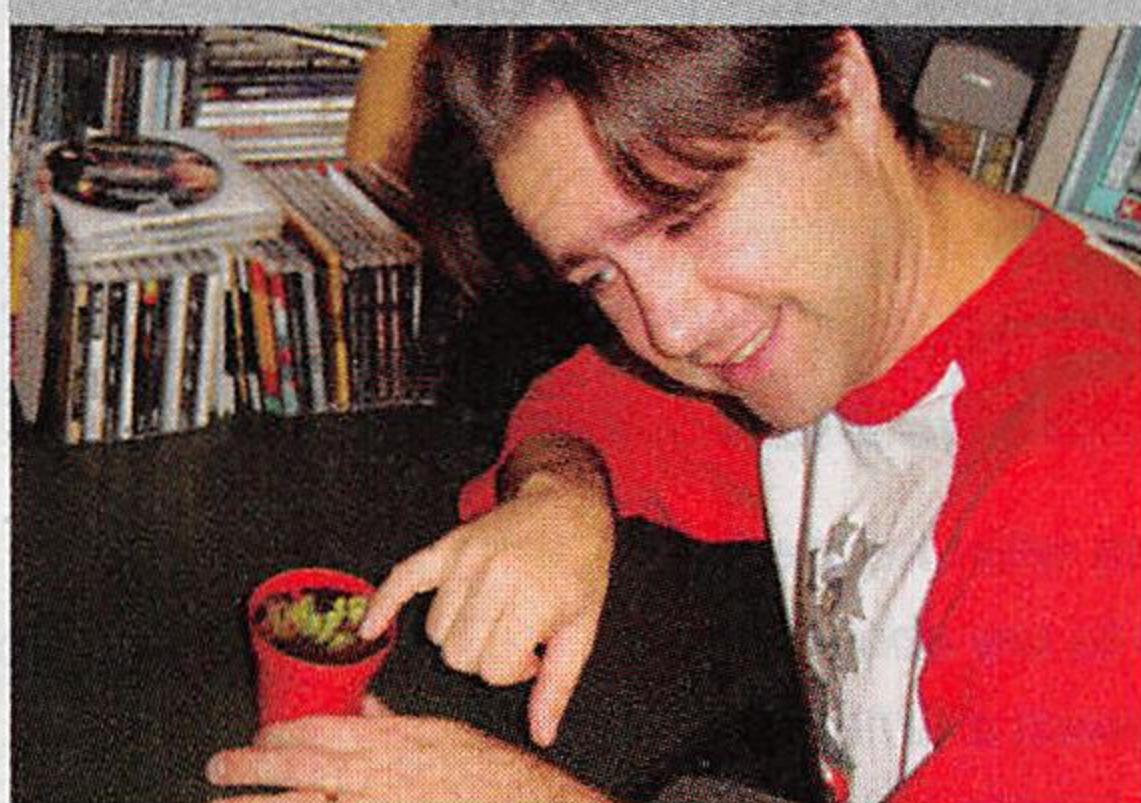
Yani Newell, Delmar, AL

DOWNTIME

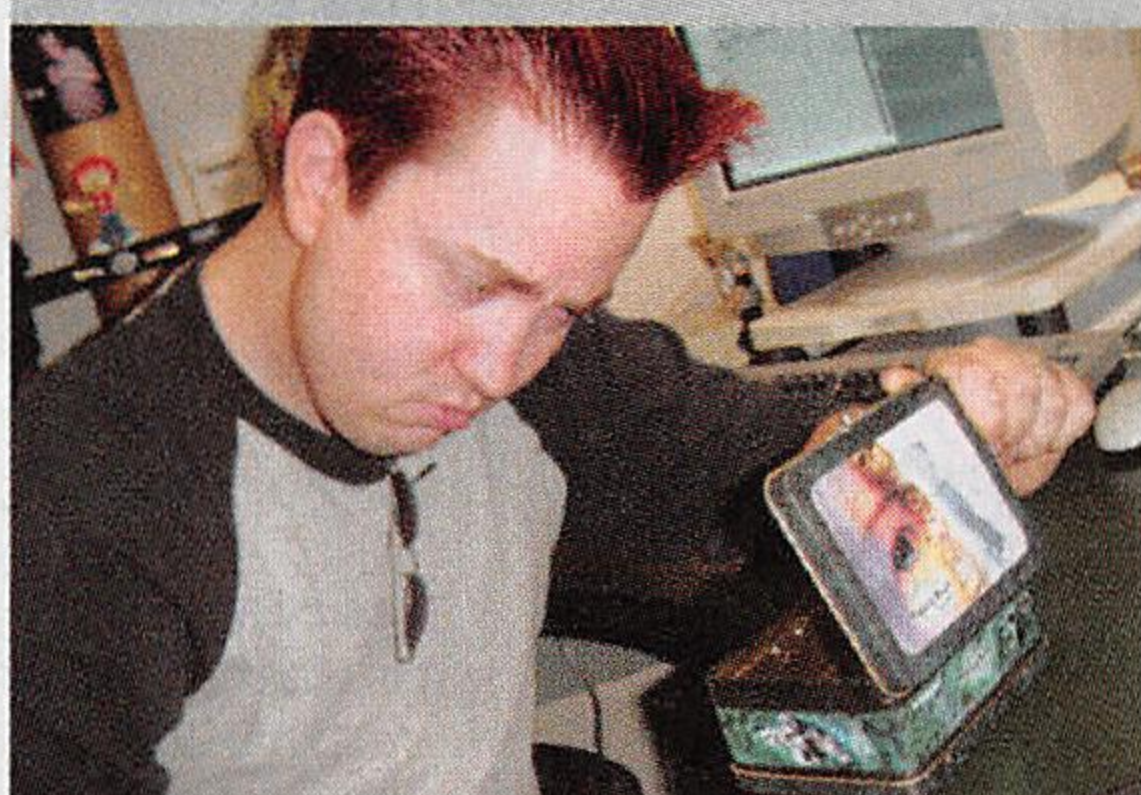
Hey, only 99% of our time is spent on playing games! We do other stuff, too!



▲ The "Boys From the Back of the Room" show off their new haircuts. *Smooth, fellas.*



▲ "Man, I gotta go find some *real* flytrap food somewhere — I'm starting to feel woozy..."



▲ "Great, tiny little miniature sandwiches and soup again. This *Parasite Eve* diet sucks!"



▲ "Randy, get that review in! Steve, where's that preview? Eric... Hey, who put glue in my seat?"

<< IT SEEMS LIKE NOBODY PAYS ATTENTION TO SOLIDITY OF THE GAMEPLAY, PHYSICS, OR CONTROLS >>

with tight deadlines, budget constraints and persistent publishers, bugs are sometimes going to turn up. Most of the time, these bugs are very minor and aren't noticed at all. However, in some cases, like the latest *Tomb Raider*, a game gets shipped with several major, or "A", bugs. Fortunately, this only happens very rarely. The sad truth is that as games get bigger and more complicated, it will require more cost and time to catch all the bugs. So, unless companies start expanding their bug-testing team, bugs are still definitely going to show up. We just hope it doesn't become a trend.

Sick Of Stealth

I was reading your preview about Rockstar North's next title: *Manhunt*. The more I read, the more I was disappointed. From the preview, it sounds like the game is COMPLETELY stealth. Everybody I know liked the *Grand Theft Auto* titles because you could run around killing at will. So what about all the people who can't stand stealth? Stealth is the only reason I didn't like *Metal Gear Solid* or *Splinter Cell*. Why can't they make games like *Hitman 2*, where you can be completely stealthy or just run around shooting anything that moves?

gmanjfreak4eva@hotmail.com

STEVE Actually, *Manhunt* gets less and less stealthy as you progress through it. Early on, when your only weapon is a plastic bag, you kind of have no choice but to sneak up on a target. However, when you get boomier armaments like a double-barreled shotgun, it becomes more of a run-and-gun game. However, *MGS* and *Splinter Cell* both rock, so I think you may have a lower threshold for stealth than most folks. You'd better rent *Manhunt* first, just to be sure.

It's Lackadaisical

I must say that I was disappointed with PSM's review of *NFS: Hot Pursuit 2*. You guys overlooked the fact that, although the game has a lot to offer, it lacks many of the elements that made the original (*NFS 3: Hot Pursuit*) so great, like racing at night or in the snow and with weather effects. How can EA claim it to be a sequel when it lacks variety

of the original? I feel EA made a bad choice to not include these features and I'm afraid that *NFS: Underground* will suffer a similar fate. Instead of "daytime only" races, it'll have "night-time" only races. Why... to capture the culture of illegal street racing? Wow, that's original! They might as well call it *NFS: Midnight Club*! Does Illegal Street Racing really take place only at night? Am I the only one bothered by this lack of variety?

Avi Winkler, avilesli@netzero.com

RANDY Sure, *NFS: HP2* lacked some features present in the original *NFS3: HP*, but the fact remains that it is still an incredible game across the board. I actually reviewed it, and did so as a singular experience. I wasn't about to knock points off because it lacked weather or time of day effects; it got the score that it got because of what it was, not what came before it.

As for *NFS: Underground*, it's set only at night, but it's form of variety will come from total car customization and completely different styles of racing, from point-to-point, to drag, to drift.

It's The Little Things

There's a lot more to games than just pretty backgrounds and cool characters. It seems like nobody pays attention to solidity of the gameplay, physics, or controls, menu setup, in-game setup, and stuff like that. To me, it's the small things that count, and I'm just wondering, where you stand on this?

M. Sanchez, turkeymaster77@lycos.co.uk

CHRIS I just don't know who you are anymore, Michael. You don't call or email me for weeks, and then when you do write me, it's this cold, soulless letter. Wasn't I the one that nicknamed you "Turkeymaster?" To think that I once called you "brother"... I... I just don't even know what else to write. And yes, great gameplay is, of course, more important than the fancy trimmings.

What... Us? Bogus?

Your most wanted games list is bogus! Only three games receive any significant amount of votes — it's because anyone can vote again and again



► This *NFS: Underground* character only comes out at night... wowza!

GAMES WE WANT TO SEE

CRIMSON RINK

From the developer of *Virtua Fighter* comes the first hockey game to focus completely on the best part of the sport... fighting! The gloves are off as your favorite NHL players pummel each other using unique special attacks and weapons — hockey sticks, pucks, thrown helmets, and even ice skates. Devastating special moves, such as the Slapshot and Hard Check, are joined by unique finishers: knock your opponent into the penalty box, or even the goal! Bonus modes include Zamboni battles a la *Twisted Metal*. Put your opponent on ice!

The one reason I got my PS2 was for the *GTA* games. I played them at my friend's house and I loved them. So I went out and spent \$200 bucks on the system, only to find out I'm not allowed to buy them. Apparently I'm allowed to play them, not buy them, which makes no sense at all.

Lee Venuli, Brookline, NH

I was thinking about buying a PS2 when my older brother moved out and took his PS2. When I tried *Dynasty Warriors 3* at a store, I knew I had to have one.

Alberto Perez, San Dimas, CA

MoH Frontline. Now I don't have to rent *Saving Private Ryan* to nearly crap myself.

Aaron Inks, Oakfield, WI

I just bought a PS2 because so many of the games were great.

Hewitt Hall, Monroe, LA

The games that got me to buy a PS2 were *Twisted Metal Black* and *Soul Reaver 2*. *TMB* proved to be worth the purchase, but I can't say the same for *Soul Reaver 2*.

Justin Zarman, Beckemeyer, IL

The game that got me to buy a PS2 was *Final Fantasy10* and *Jak & Daxter*. I am a huge fan of *Final Fantasy* and *Jak* looked like a great game. I was right about both.

Charles Michael, Laurie, MO

The game that got me to buy the PS2 was... well, actually it was a present! Lucky me!!!

G.H. Bragdon, Madawaska, ME

HARDCORE

It's All Tokoya's Fault

have been using the *FFX* strategy guide in the January 2002 issue like a bible, and it says "Megadeath will never kill every party member." So Yunalesca changed to her third form (and my husband was glad he wouldn't be seeing Hellbiter again) and Megadeath pops up on the screen! I confidently say "It says in PSM that Megadeath NEVER kills your whole party." Well, the little death person pops out and BOOM!! All three party members DIE!!! Say it ain't so! The most trusted guide we have used for this game is... WRONG? NOOO!!!!!! The horror... the pain... the agony... Tell me it was a mistake, and that y'all have learned to never say "Never."

Claire Adaway, Address Withheld

ERIC Actually, I wasn't the strategy editor back then, but yeah — that's wrong. If I remember correctly, it's actually advantageous here to let your party members remain zombified, because Megadeath can't kill what's already dead. Use Reflect upon yourself to keep her healing spells from hurting you — it'll bounce back and heal her, but not too much. Oh, and learn Holy. It'll gut her like a fish.

if they clear their computer history. It's now a kind of competition on the site. It is not a good system. You should go back to writing what YOU think are the 10 most wanted games.

Fire Lizard, kacruelyrshp@yahoo.com

RANDY There's a chance we'll bring back our own most-wanted list in the not-too-distant future (next Sunday, A.D.?), but for now I'm working with our web guys to make certain that the polls on our site are as tamper-proof as possible.

No "X" Rated Stuff Here

I recently read about the only AO-rated game, named *Neurodancer*. What information, if any, do

ASK THE 800-LB. GORILLA

I DON'T WINK AT JUST ANYONE, YOU KNOW...



I have a friend who loves the game *Wild Arms 3*. Everytime he finishes playing it, he has a strong urge to chew on cardboard. But when he does chew on cardboard, he doesn't feel much better. Can you explain this or maybe even help him with it?

Kevan Jackson, simple_name@hotmail.com

BILL It sounds like your friend has a rather severe case of CPMS (Corrugated Paper Mastication Syndrome), which is kinda like chewing paint chips for the lead content. My advice to you is to take him to any fast food outlet for a "hot sandwich." He'll get some fat and cholesterol that way, but he will definitely miss the fiber. Have him eat the wrapper as well...

My GameShark doesn't work. I typed in the code for

infinite air, plugged it into my arm and went for a swim, but I couldn't hold my breath for more than a minute. What am I doing wrong?

Bradley Colmerauer, CloudStrife9987@AOL.com

BILL Bradley, Bradley, Bradley... when will you ever learn? We've talked about this before, but you never seem to pay attention to what I'm telling you. Alright... for the last time... make sure you've got the GameShark plugged in to a working electrical outlet before you dive into the pool. That should pretty much solve all of your breathing problems.

Have a question that requires a thoughtful, adult answer? Send an e-mail to bdonohue@futurenetworkusa.com, with "800-LB. Gorilla" in the Subject Line.

you have on this game (just curious...)?

Ben Kirchman, pkirchma@tampabay.rr.com

ERIC Well, I'm not sure what game you're talking about. However, according to the ESRB, there are 16 products that have gotten an "Adults Only" rating, the most well-known of which is probably the PC title, *Riana Rouge*. None of the titles, though, are available outside of the PC/Mac arena.

What's In A Name?

I've noticed that there are many games out there that are sold with two different labels. One is the original cover that was used when the game was first released and the second contains a PlayStation Greatest Hits banner at the top. When I recently asked a sales clerk about this on a *Sly Cooper* game, he said that the games were the same except that you couldn't use cheat codes on the Greatest Hits version. I have not tested this, but found it hard to believe. Is there any truth to this?

Daniel J Sterrick, djsterick@juno.com

RANDY Not only is that totally untrue, but I want you to do something for me. The next time you're in that store, ask to speak

to the manager. Tell them what happened, and see what they have to say about it. The only difference between a Greatest Hits title and the original is the price — if the sales clerk was saying that just to get you to buy a full-priced version, that's just wrong. Otherwise, the staff there is just plain clueless.

Stood Up Again

I just want to know why there are no more PS2 exclusives out there. I see how Nintendo's GameCube gets OUR *Resident Evil* and OUR *Final Fantasy* franchises. A *Final Fantasy* game is a GameCube exclusive — now that's low. I want to know why OUR games are coming out on other systems, and why there are no more PlayStation 2 exclusives.

Eddie Gill, wardo2020@hotmail.com

CHRIS Eddie, GameCube has, like, fifty games total — cut those guys some slack. Besides, there are still plenty of great PS2 exclusives, more than any other system. I know what you mean, though — we PlayStation gamers build a franchise like *Resident Evil*, and then it dumps us right before prom night. And then the heartless wench won't return our calls, or even have

Top 10 Silliest Game Names

10. *Devil May Cry*
Silly? Cool? We're still divided on this one.
9. *R&C2: Going Commando*
"Going commando" is slang for "no underwear." Really!
8. *Zone of The Enders*
Just screams "giant robot action," doesn't it?
7. *Resident Evil*
Is this when scary people move in next door?
6. *Syphon Filter*
Isn't this a car part?
5. *The Bouncer*
Talk about misleading titles...
4. *Herdy Gerdy*
Did they mean hurly-burly?
3. *I-Ninja*
No, I ninjal
2. *Yanya Caballista*
Skateboarding game, or opening act for Yanni?
1. *MG53: Snake Eater*
'Nuff said.

The main reason why I got the PS2 is *DBZ Budokai*. That game sure wasn't much of a hit, though...

Edgar Martinez, Long Beach, CA

The *Resident Evil* series is the main reason for me owning a PS2. It fueled my fascination of everything dead.

Tom Lankford, Harrington, DE

Wait... there are games?

Trevor Leander, Matthews, NC

I originally got it for *ATV Offroad Fury*... now it really sucks. I also liked the James Bond games. Come to think of it, those kinda suck too... what was I thinking? But there are plenty of great games and I love my PS2!!!!!!

Eddie, Grosse Pointe, MI

Sadly, *Simpsons Road Rage* made me buy my PS2... so many tears...

Andrew Scott, Medicine Hat, AB

I bought a PS2 under the impression that *ONI* was a sequel to the *Fear Effect* series. I was a little disappointed, but it turned out to be a great system anyway!

Joseph Asphahani, Peoria, IL

Who needs games? One of my personal favorite ways to pass the time is staring at those beautiful, flying balls of light.

Trevor Leander, Matthews, NC

We bought ours for *GT3*. My boyfriend is a car fiend... real ones, imaginary ones, anything with a motor and 4 wheels.

Emily Liu-Elizabeth, Los Gatos, CA

the decency to explain herself to us in public, because *God forbid* she should be seen talking to the guy that didn't make the cut for the varsity football team... But, uh, yeah, back to what you were saying, losing cool games to other systems sucks and all that.

The Name Game

I've been discriminated against for years in the world of videogames. You may be thinking to yourself, how are you different from the rest of us? Well, I'll tell you, I am one of the unfortunate people plagued with a long last name. If you do not suffer from this predicament, it maybe difficult for you to realize how big a problem this really is. There's nothing worse than getting R-I-T-T-E-N-H-O-U-S punched in and having the game stop on E. I thought the only thing that was supposed to stop on E was my car (ha, ha, ha.). But seriously, that just ruins my whole day. How am I supposed to lead a team or army to victory if I can't even spell my name correctly on a contract or treaty? This affects other things, such as Create-a-Player, user profiles, and all save data. I recently purchased *NCAA Football* for PS2 and I am thrilled that it will accept my lengthy name. I applaud the developers for this. But I was wondering if any of you down at PSM share my dilemma... especially Dan Fitzpatrick.

Nick Rilttenhouse, nickrilt@aol.com

BILL Geez, Nick, you need to chill out a bit! Sure, a long name can lead to frustration in many areas of life, but personalizing your game army or team shouldn't be one of them! Listen up...

Just look at how you signed your AOL username. Now, what's wrong with using nickrilt as your gaming name? It gets the point across and doesn't use any more than eight letters.

Heck, around here, we usually refer to Dan by any number of short, pithy, really descriptive, Anglo-Saxon nicknames...

It Ads Up

On the cover of the November '03 issue, there was an advertisement for the N-GAGE handheld system. On the front was a picture of a double wide trailer and below it read, "This is where I left Kate, Lucy, and Michelle begging for more" and on the back was a picture of a graveyard and the words, "This is where I came back to life". Does this make any sense? Please explain this.

Matt Stoner,

francehed@juno.com

RANDY It will probably never make any sense, but at least it confused you, right? They're probably teaching "confusion advertising" in college now or something, and someone couldn't wait to try it out in the real world.

Ooh Rah!

I am presently "camping" in central Iraq at this time and so naturally, a PS2 is a little difficult to find. Gaming magazines have become the next best thing and PSM has proven to be the "rare gem" among the other magazines. My question is about *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II*. I have seen several different projected release dates within PSM and other magazines. Do you guys have any insight into what's going on?

CPL Alex White, U.S. Army

ERIC Well, yes and no... At press time, the release dates of both *BG:DA2* and *Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel* have been suspended, pending the result of a legal battle between Interplay and Vivendi Universal. So both games may never come out, or they may be out by the time you read this. By the way, on behalf of all of us, I'd like to thank you and all the members of our armed forces for doing your jobs with honor, dignity, and devotion. You make us proud, and it's a tremendous pleasure to count you among our readers.

TECH TALK

Two For The Price Of One?

After reading several articles about the upcoming PSP, I couldn't be more excited about getting my hands on one. However, there is one question burning in the back of my mind. Will I have to buy games twice if I want to play them on the PS2 and the PSP? If so, would the PSP games be any cheaper than the regular \$50 bucks I'm dishing out already? If Sony was really smart, they would make it so the PSP could link to the PS2 and display the game on the TV, which would save consumers lots of money. Of course, game developers want more money, obviously, so me buying games twice would be a dream for them! Please tell me if you have heard about how this will work.

Tony D, cyberspaz3067@hotmail.com

RANDY PSP games are going to be complete different from PS2 games — the two systems aren't compatible beyond sending data back and forth between each other. For instance, there may be a version of *Tekken* released for PSP, but it won't be the same *Tekken* you can get for PS2. Beyond that, I agree that an option to play PSP games on your TV would be great. Whether Sony implements something like this or not remains to be seen.

For me, it was *Kinetica*. Racing along in a *TRON*-type bodysuit with wheels attached to your hands and feet, speeding along tracks worthy of *McG* and *Hot Wheels*.

Eddie Vertigo, Austin, TX

Metal Gear 2, back when I thought Snake would be the only character

you play as...

Brad Wagner, Armada, MI

Smuggler's Run... you could see for miles and there was NO fog. I still haven't seen another graphics engine that could do this on PS2.

Greg Moye, Beckley, WV

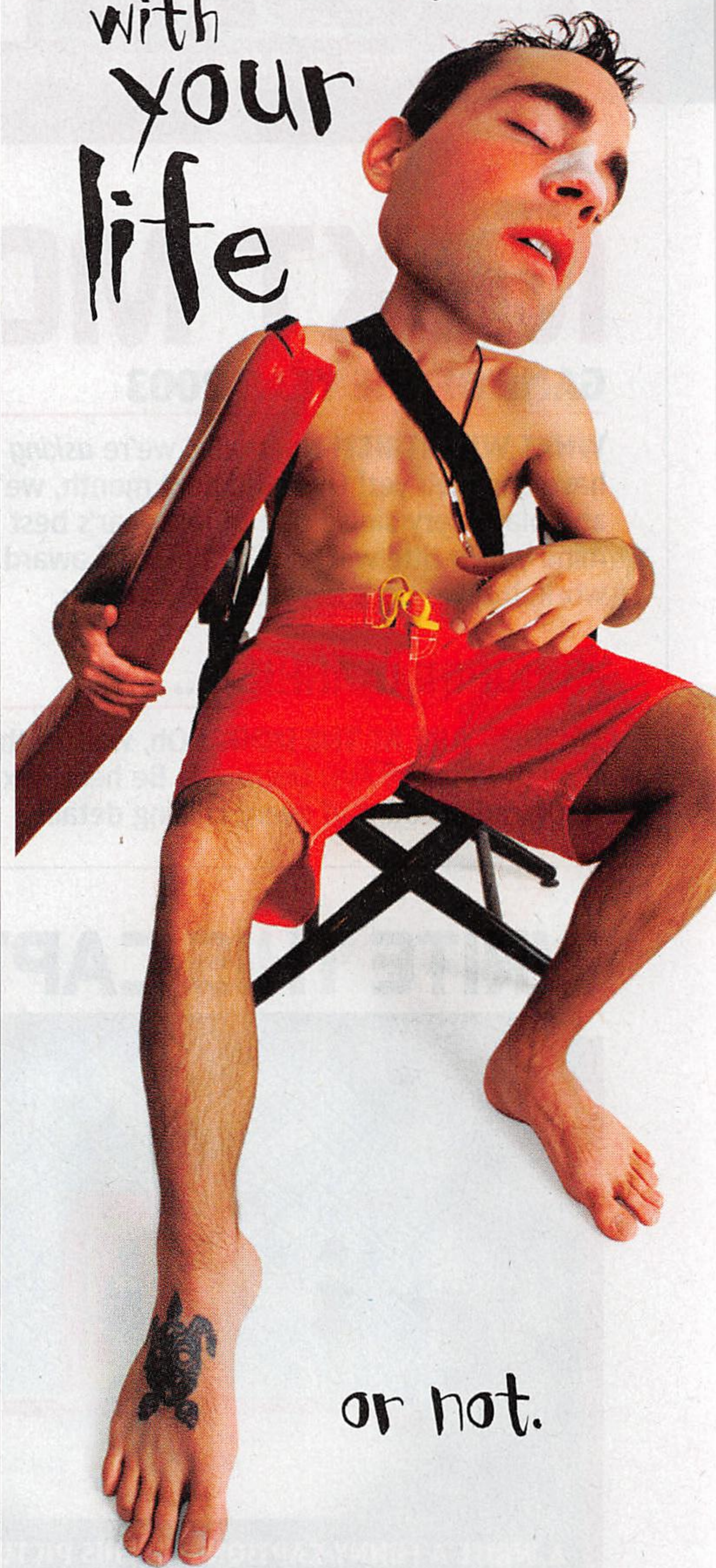
I bought my PS2 just to make my Dreamcast jealous.

Tom Coleman, Creekside, PA

I bought a PS2 for *BMX XXX*. \$229.99 for a black bar over the boobs! You know how many Playboys that would buy?

Zeke Virgas, Orlando, FL

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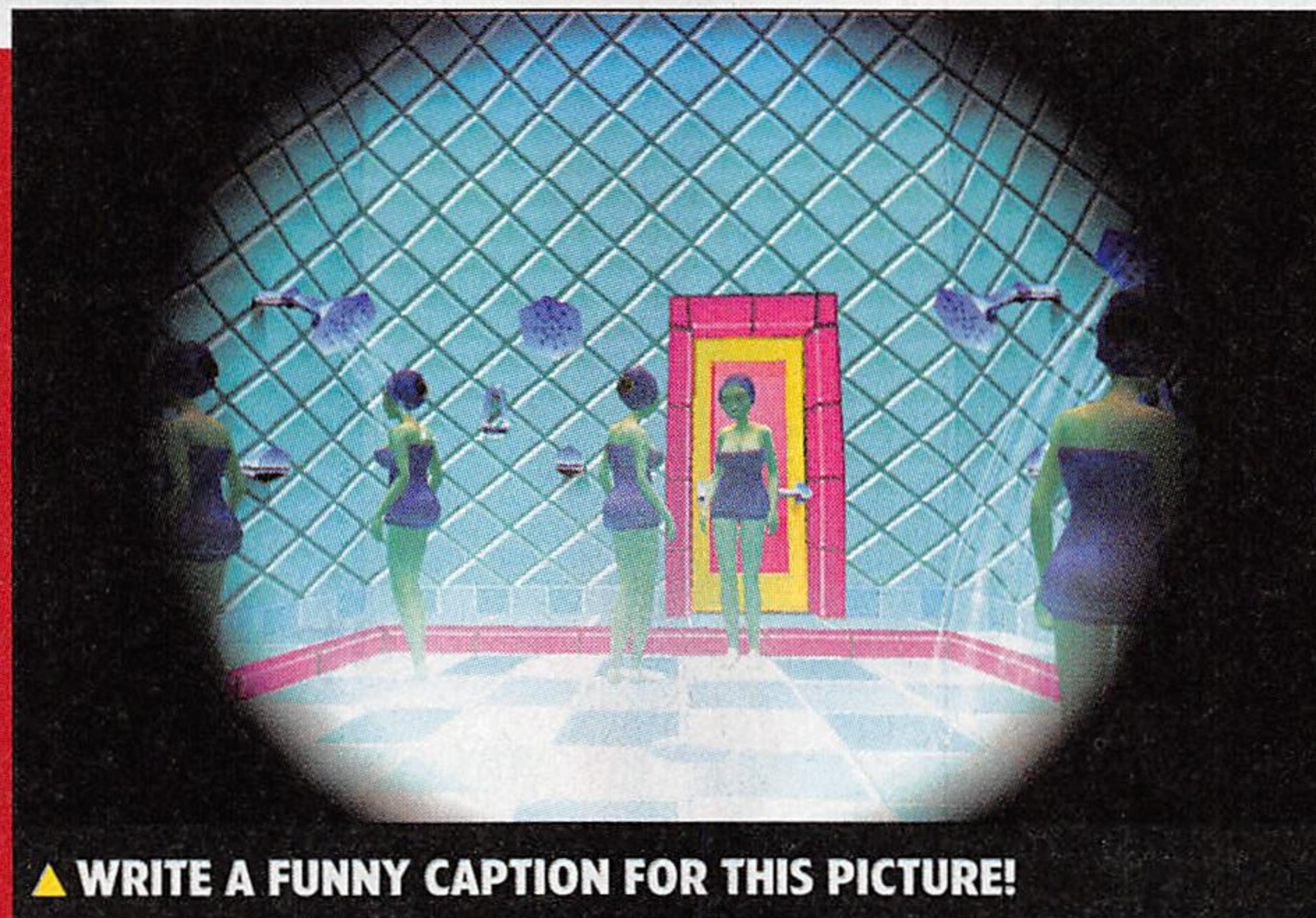
GAME OF THE YEAR 2003

WHAT WILL IT BE?! No, really, we're *asking* you — we don't have any idea yet! Over the next month, we're going to go back and play every single one of last year's best games to determine which title will win PSM's GOTY award. Yeah, it's hard work, but we do it because we love you.

MUUURRRAAAHHHH....

ZOMBIES ARE AT THE DOOR! Oh, wait — that's just our early copy of *Resident Evil: Outbreak*. Be here next month for our full first-hand account of every chilling detail!

WRITE THIS CAPTION!



▲ **WRITE A FUNNY CAPTION FOR THIS PICTURE!**

Jot down a funny caption for the above screen, and if we like yours the best, we'll send you a PSM Prize Pack filled with cool PlayStation 2 goodies! Just send an e-mail with your entry to psm@futurenetworkusa.com, with the subject header "PSM Caption #80" (or send your entry to **PSM Caption #80**, c/o Future Network USA, Brisbane, CA 94005). Be sure to include your full name and address so we can contact you if you win!

3 YEARS AGO IN PSM...

January, 2001 • Issue #41
The PS2 era gets started...

Three years ago we reported on the PlayStation 2's U.S. launch, officially kicking off the PS2 era in PSM. We'd spent the previous year guessing what the new system would be like while taking peeks at its first round of games, but at long last the system was out — it was finally *real*.

We were so excited by anything PS2-related that we allowed ourselves to be fooled by early demos of Square's *The Bouncer*, which promised to take action games to a new level (that's why *The Bouncer*'s main guy featured so prominently on that issue's cover). Well, as we all know now, the game ended up being a dud, so it's a little embarrassing to look at this cover. At least *MGS2* turned out great :-)



AND THE WINNER IS...

VICKI BICKEL of Bothell, WA is the winner of our October Caption Contest. Vicki, your PSM Prize Pack is on the way!



▲ "In an amazing display of athleticism, he caught all three balls at once."



▲ Snake, see that guy in front of you? Take him out! Put that barrel to his head and pull the trigger, man!

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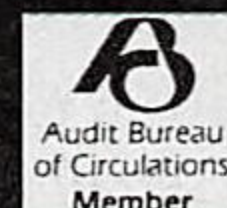
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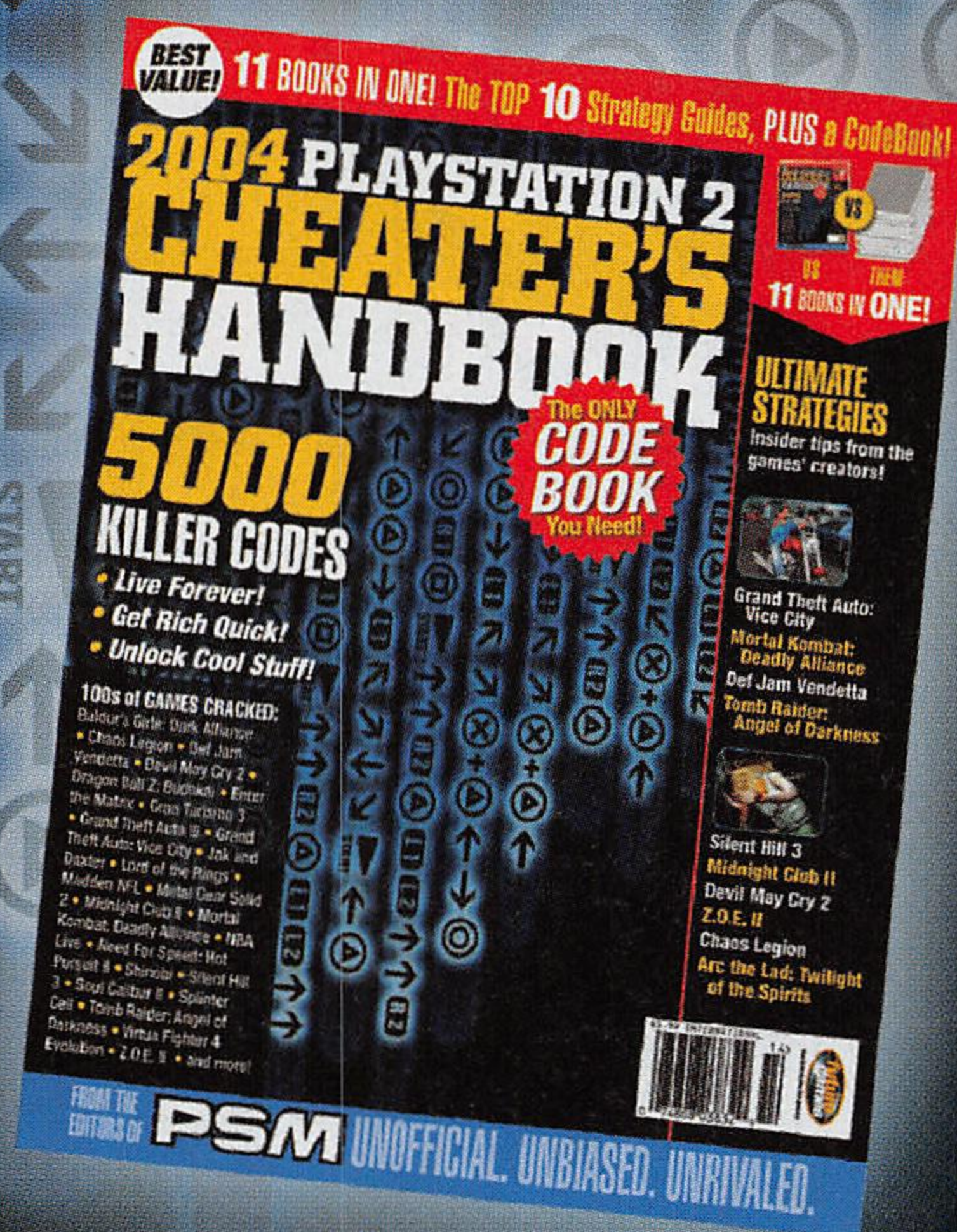
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FROM THE
EDITORS OF
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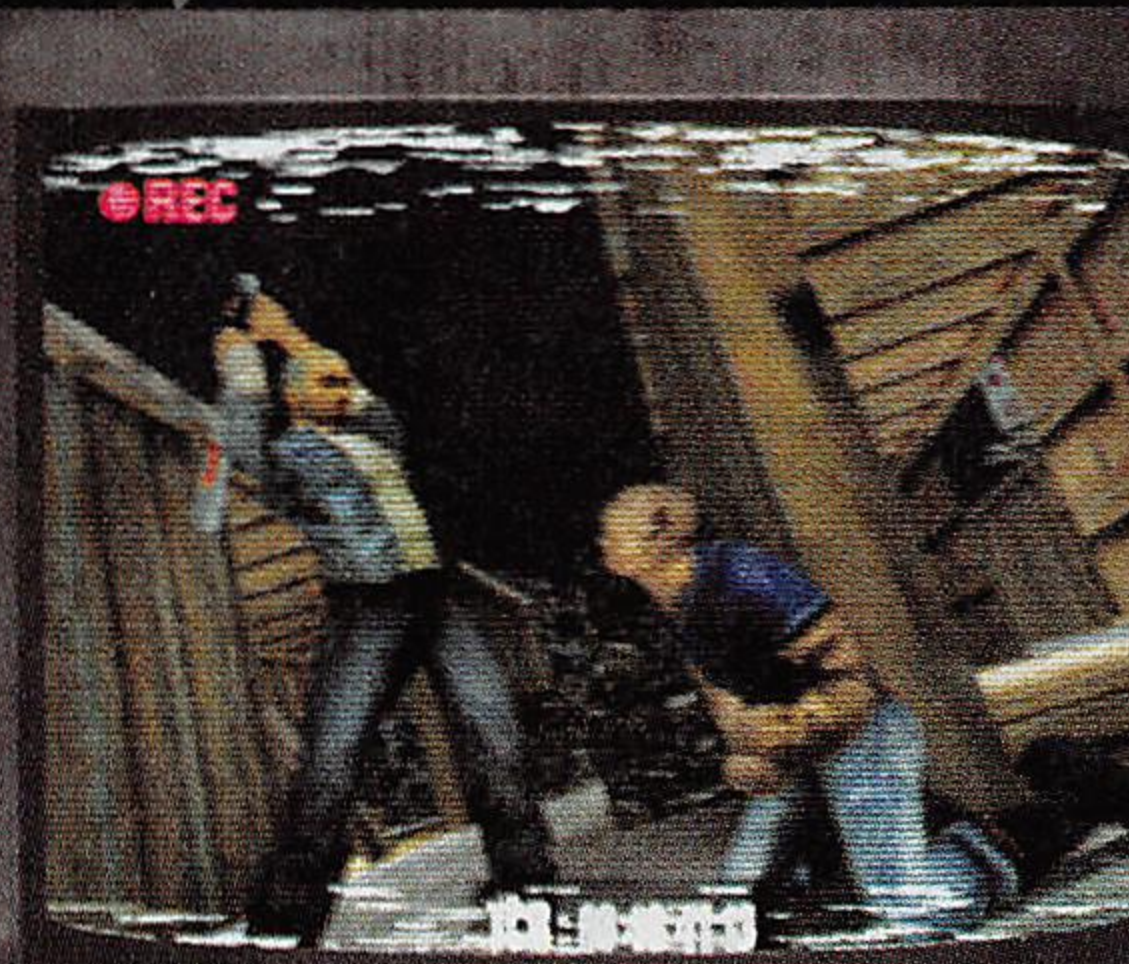
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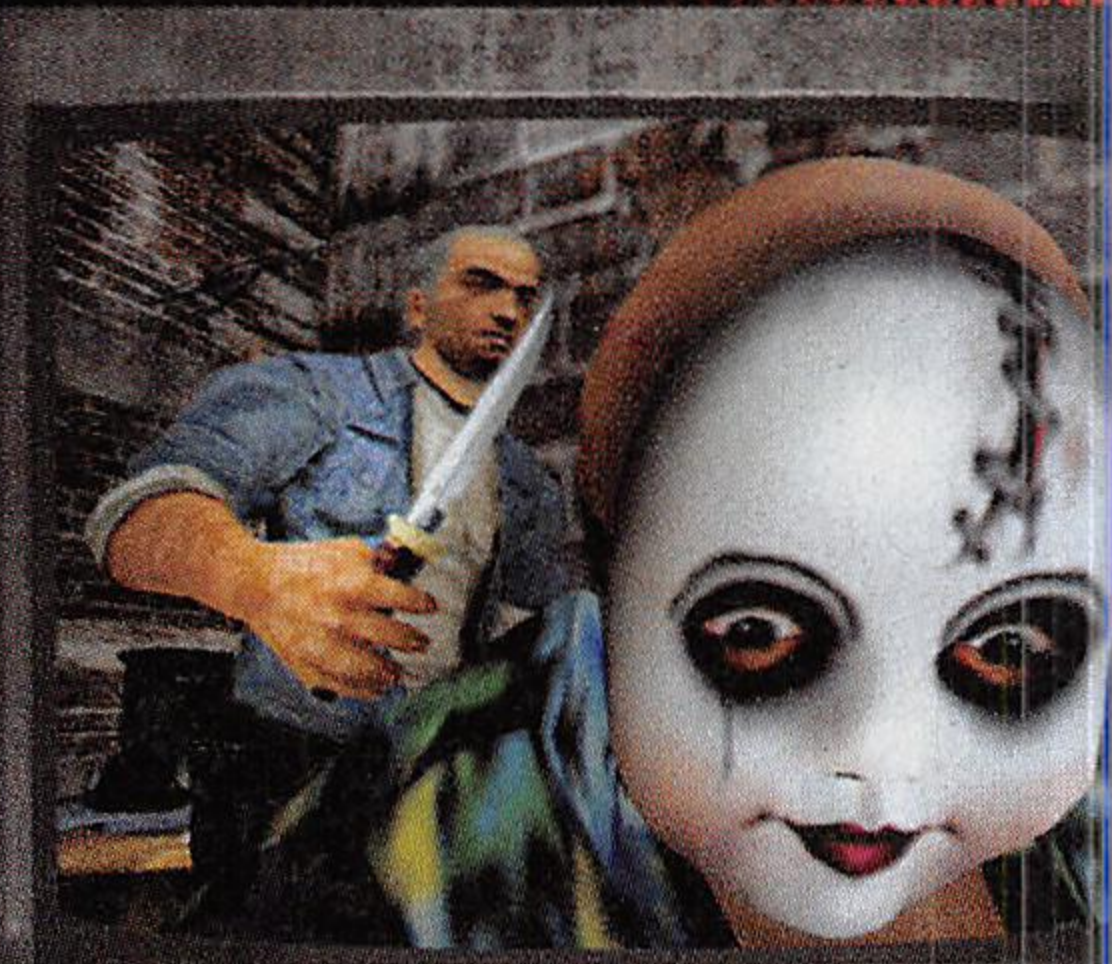
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Strong Language
Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

PlayStation 2

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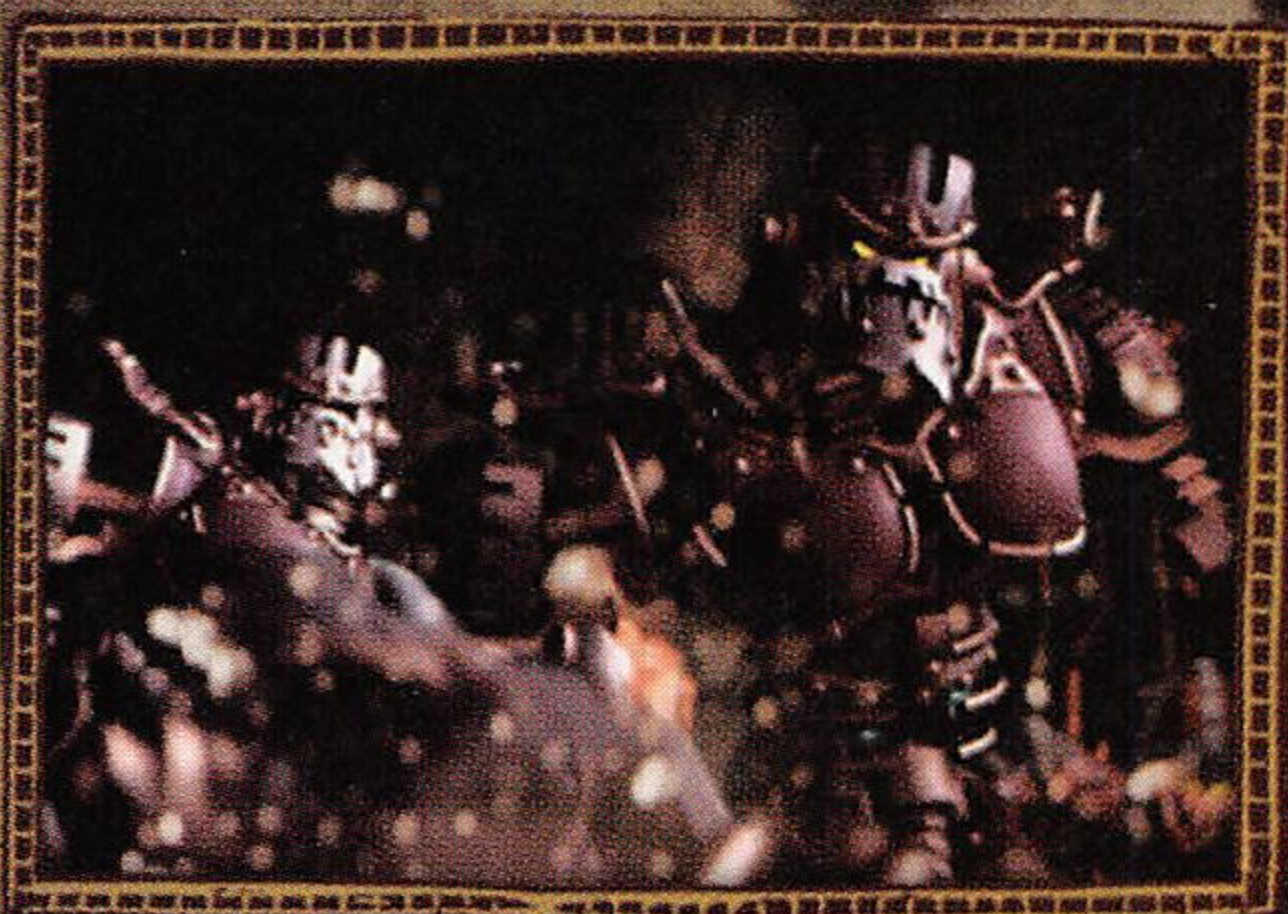
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PlayStation 2

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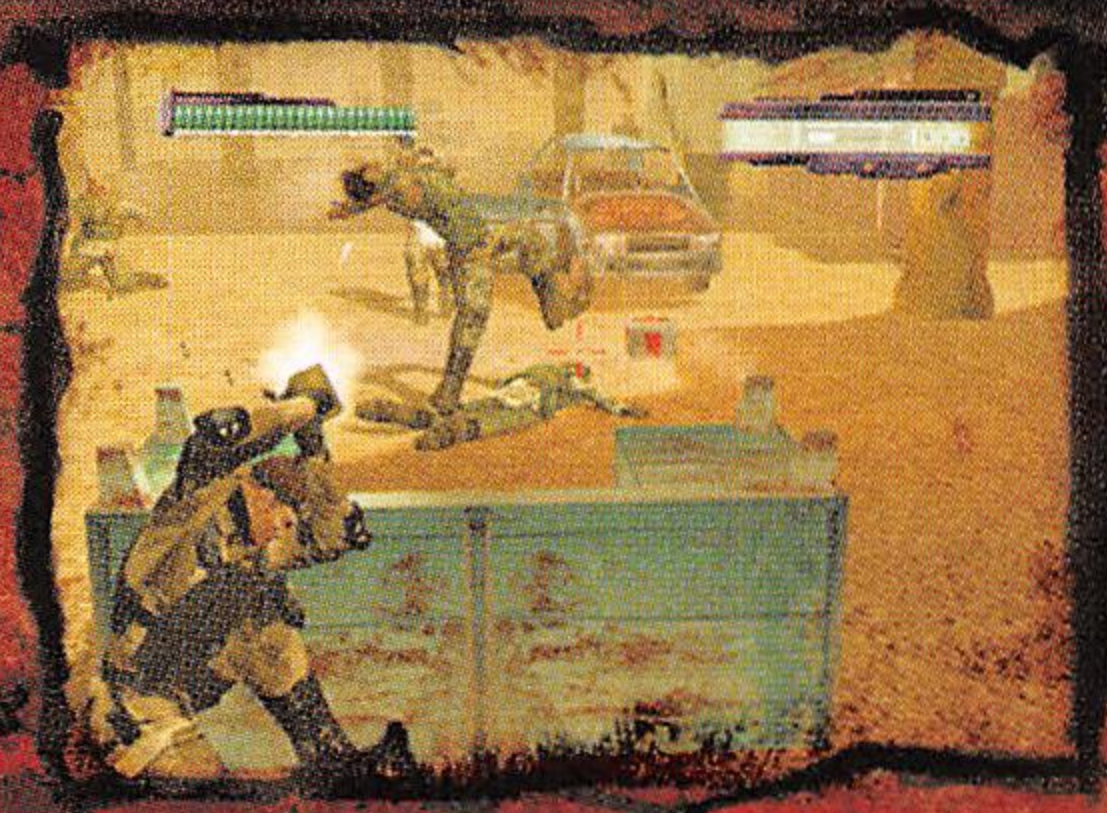
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PlayStation 2

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